WHO DAT!

Chronicles of a Clueless Super Hero from the fabled land of Chalmatia

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The Fabled Land of Chalmatia and the Palaces of Yat

It was a dark and stormy night in the land of Chalmatia. Built on a swamp and as flat as a pancake, Chalmatia was bordered by an encroaching and angry sea that every year grew closer as hungry South American rodents gnawed their way closer through the tall swamp grass. Every few years brisk 150 mph winds would overtop the dikes to fertilize the Chalmatian plain, level all the buildings, and scatter the Chalmatians and their F-150's to the far parishes. The ever-patient Chalmatians would soon return and dutifully start all over again, so great was their bail bond to the land.

During soggy times like these, the Chalmatians would huddle in their little frame huts, and pass the time while the internet was down telling each other stories, entirely made up, about the fabled Kingdom of Yat. As it was told, foretold, retold, and oversold, behind an inter-dimensional force field, or as outsiders would call it, a chain link fence was the Kingdom of Yat, a place so mysterious and distant that the locals would often greet each other with a hearty 'where y'at', symbolic of where they have misplaced their mythic homeland. The rumored discovery of the mineral yeayurite was kept secret by the Yats, and husbanding the precious mineral, so useful in the manufacture of ceramic door knobs, they used the proceeds to hire a crew of Bolivian migrants to build a wondrous metropolis full of lofty spires, rocket transports, grand

cathedrals, ornate palaces, and Ferris wheels. They kept their secret from the locals, as they did not want to be beneficent with their munificence, or in other words, they wanted to keep their property values high. Naturally, in this harsh and unforgiving clime, the Chalmatians evolved characteristics that befitted a proud and hungry race. The Chalmatians were known for their buxom maids and muscular lads, who, unburdened by anything close to an IQ, worked to harvest crawdads, or in the local foundry poured out plastic ingots that would be hammered out into dining utensils so that the poor could feed themselves with the proper tableware. They were a poor but happy folk, oblivious to the wonders of the Kingdom of Yat, which to them was no more than a local chained up theme park in the swamp visible in the distance from the highway.

Although the Yats were Catholic in the inclination and Roman in their love of bread sticks and NFL circuses, above all the Yats believed in mystical powers of the sauce. To the Yat elders, it was believed that the sauce permeates and sautés the universe. The hot side of the sauce was the source of great power and seasoning, and all Yat masters were aware of the sweet side of the sauce, and how when unleashed it could be the ruin of their civilization as well as their etouffee. Indeed, there were ripples and stirrings in the sauce, as culinary tastes were changing. From hot and spicy to sweet and sour, these stirrings called for a hero to restore the balance in the sauce, upon which rested the lip-smacking good taste of all. And it was in this boiling

and spicy cauldron that a hero was born, and thus began the legend of Who Dat!

A Who named Dat

King Rocky sat on his keg in his palace and brooded. A turkey leg in one hand and a brew in his other, King Rocky pondered his theme park realm. All 4,323,121 of his subjects walked and ambled and zoomed and trotted to and fro, and in this clockwork realm wound up just so, he marveled that so much busy ness was required in a magical kingdom where everything was served up automatically, sized perfectly, and without a fault. It was like having dominion of a Rolex watch, which as he looked at his wrist, was telling him that Who Dat was late to his call, again.

His first-born son Who Dat was the heir to the throne of the Kingdom of Chalmatia, but to prove his worthiness to the throne, as well as to get him out of the house, the King had a radical idea in mind. Fortunately, his other son was a bit timelier, if not tidier. His second born son, Count Carlos swaggered into the hall. Wearing an oversized Viking helmet and ill-fitting leather armor, and with a girth as wide as a walrus and a long toothy grin and out of sorts whiskers, Carlos was the pride of the family and its most accomplished warrior, as ascribed in leader boards everywhere.

"How's it hangin!" exclaimed the King.

"Yo! Where it's at! Whatcha been up to?"

"Well, I killed three hundred skeletons, two hundred zombies, and twenty-five bosses with my mighty axe, upgraded my weapons and hit points by a thousand, and reached level 61, and all before lunch. All in all,

I've put 600 hours in my open world adventure, but horizons are getting' wider and wider with each update!" he said with an idiotic smirk.
"Bravo Carlos!" beamed his proud father. "You are indeed a mighty gamer!"
"Where is dat brudder of yours?"
"Dunno. I think he's at our sacred temple again, reading up on scriptures. Know what I'm sayin?"
King Rocky sighed. "He is the heir, apparently. No madder, since he has not yet decided on an idle career for his idle time, I need to talk to da boy."
He shouted at the court chamberlain. "Call for Who Dat! I want to see him at once!"
The inner sanctum library and coffee shop was the most private and secluded place in the kingdom, accessible only to those few in the kingdom who knew how to decipher its sacred texts, written in an incomprehensible script called English. Here were compiled the sacred pop up books and comics that provided the literature and lore of the kingdom. Who Dat hunched over these sacred scribblings and fiddled with pleasure the cardboard birds and trees. From these he learned of an alluring yet forbidding world just outside the dome, and of tall tales of super heroes whose colorful deeds were handed down in comic books from generation to generation. He wanted to be among that number, and he turned to the chamberlain as he marched in and beckoned. Something was up, and as he left the sanctum, now as empty as a tomb, he took comfort in the thought that he could come back soon and stack all of his belongings there for safe

keeping, confident that it would lay as undisturbed as King Tut's tomb, a fellow traveler in kingly realms who also it was told liked pop up books.

Soon, he entered the great hall, its walls festooned with murals, moose heads, and 70-inch TV screens. At its end was his father, waiting impatiently.

"Yes, father! You rang?" said Who Dat in a supplicant tone.

"Yes, my son," said King Rocky. "It has been some time since you have come of age, and like a ripe cheese, the time is soon coming that you will take the keg, and command of our glorious realm, where everything is on tap. But I sense some reluctance in you, as if you want to make it to the exits before the park closes. But you must never forget that you have a seasonal pass here and can jump to the head of the line at any time."

Who Dat looked at his father dejectedly. "Father, I have been on all the rides in our realm, sampled our fastest of foods, and have had photo ops with all of our characters. But I am empty inside."

"Turkey leg?" offered the king.

"Not that kind of empty! It's a sense of meaning, fulfillment, a sense of purpose or meaning you might say."

"Well, I don't know about that. Meaning-less is the name of the game nowadays. A place like Yat would be a dream come true for most folks because we don't have any meaning at all! Our attractions are distractions, and once experienced, all go poof in the mind, and you can repeat the experience the next day, like nothing has ever happened. But I have long known

that you have been cursed with long term memory, a disability to be sure that can only be treated in the outside world, where there is chaos to be tamed, evil to be conquered, beds to be made!"

"So, when do I start?" asked Who Dat with rising enthusiasm.

"Easy, just go through the ticket booth, through the parking lot, take a left and keep walking! A bit of warning though. As you know, Yat is surrounded by a transparent golden dome that shades the sun light to a dim red. If you leave the dome of Yat you will experience the rays oi a yellow sun, and in our sacred lore, passed down by many a comic book, this unexperienced radiation will bestow you with untold powers."

"Such as…"

"Standard super hero features like super speed, super strength, ability to fly, reverse time, x-ray, heat, and 20/20 vision. Upgrade options are mastery of the sauce and a college education. These last two skills allow you to levitate objects and construct comprehensible sentences."

"Hmm, comprehensibility!" said Who Dat, impressed. "To be an experienced interlocutor would be the grandest power of all!"

King Rocky's eyes rolled. "Yup, whatever you say!"

"But are there any weaknesses that can counter my superior powers?"

"Green cheese," said King Rocky without hesitation.

"Because of the yellow sun's rays?"

"Nope," said King Rocky. "You're just allergic to green cheese, and sun bathing won't help much."
"So, what is my responsibility given these great powers?"
"Haven't thought of it much, even though the entire population of Yat would have the same powers if they left our dome, which we haven't the slightest inclination. Irresponsibility is an easier call, don't you know? But I would gather, it would be the standard super hero stuff. You know, explore new worlds, do good deeds, solve galactic mysteries, rescue the odd damsel in distress, and from time to time, the human race, and get out of the house!!! These people need a hero, and as you can see that I and my people just don't have the time. You on the other hand have time to burn, and if you can't save the world virtually, might as well do it realistically. Remember, you don't have a save game function, and if you die, you stay dead."
"Ouch!" exclaimed Who Dat. "Obviously, life is set to the hardest setting!"
King Rocky stroked his beard in thought. "You will need a disguise. A pair of glasses and an ill-fitting suit and hat usually does the trick, and to complete the illusion you can act like a timid oaf in public who is all thumbs."
"But dad," implored Who Dat, "I AM a timid oaf in public who is all thumbs!"
"Good!" said the King with hearty laugh. "Then the disguise is complete! No one will notice your clumsiness when you leap tall buildings and move

mountains. Your accomplishments will be your desolations, it is the way of the super hero."

"So, staying in the library and writing a few good books won't hack it?"

"Nope," said the King. "You have to destroy stuff, lots of stuff, and knowing you, I think you are quite up to the task!"

Dirty Birds

And so, Who Dat, having donned his formal wear of spandex outfit, red cape and skull cap affixed with a scarlet letter W, was ready for a day out in the town. The ancient city of Nawlins, bordering Chalmatia to the west, was wisely placed on a vermin and mosquito ridden plain surrounded by swamps, bisected by a great muddy river, subject to devastating hurricanes, and it was sinking. The city was founded some centuries earlier by the French explorer the Marquis de Lapdance, who bumped into some Native Americans who were traipsing through the swamp on their way to somewhere else. Needing a place to install an outhouse, he offered them some glittering blockchains for the swampland, which the natives, who were just passing through, accepted with surprise and a sly smile, and for the next two hundred years the city was passed back and forth between the French, Spanish, English, and an odd Lithuanian, until the United States finally got stuck with it. A boon perhaps for the newly born USA, as Nawlins soon became a property developer's dream. Since disease and deprivation inevitably killed off most of the new colonists, it was easy to continuously resell their holdings for a tidy profit.

With such appealing characteristics, the place attracted the naturally delusional, and gathering together in their deluded way, the city folk sang, and danced, and partied and paraded. But above all, the Nawlingians

had an abiding faith in their religion, and in their heavenly Saynts.

The Saynt's were the local foosball team, and if the amount of attendance on Sunday was the mark of a great religion, the Saynts were the one true faith. The Saynts religion was replete with the usual trappings of a religion, with sudden death, hail marys, and sacrificial lambs, or in today's case, sacrificial birds. For today was a special day in Nawlins, as the Dirty Birds had arrived as a needful sacrifice to the Saynts. And important too, for the Dirty Birds were an impudent bunch, bent on taking the Saynts title, standing, and even draft choices from them. To compound the sacrilege, the Dirty Birds came with a rude and noisy retinue, who meandered in the View Caray, clucking wildly, and offering the local chicks beads in order to see their drum sticks.

The Saynts temple was an immense domed structure and prayer hall where supplicants gathered with their few worldly possessions. A procession of Saynts bishops crowed from the rafters with holy miters that were smitier than thou. The Saynts faithful were an inbred breed, an extended family whose last names, as Who Dat gathered from the back of their shirts, were mainly Breeze. As needful supplicants to the faith, many thousands of the homeless gathered about the dome with their meager possessions. It was a sad sight to behold. Whole families huddled together in makeshift tents by their pickup trucks, cooking humble meals on their little barbeques, and drowning their sorrows in pale ales. These 'tailgaters' were there

as supplicants before the mighty True Breeze, who they hoped would give them another miracle, so great was their faith.

Who Dat took a glance at the team program, with the Saynts '$' moniker emblazoned on the cover in bright gold. The team was very diverse, with Hawaiian team members Holiokqanda Jones, Palawanhui Miller, Trayquando Smith, and others with all tech names like Al Camera and Mark Instagram. A brave lot they were, and happy it seemed to suffer any manner of injury in their roles from broken bones to concussions, with their only worry was of being cut.

Who Dat approached the stadium, and as he neared the gate, an earnest looking gentleman whose badge initials were PR looked at him angrily.

"Where have you been? You're late for the game!" he shouted.

"Late?" said Who Dat in surprise.

"You are the Saynts mascot, and you know that you have to be here an hour before the game. Just hurry on in and get to the sidelines. And you know your part!"

Humbled and more than a bit confused about his role, Who Dat entered the stadium, and wandered the sidelines as he heard his name called in an up swelling and roaring crescendo. A chorus of 'Who Dats' filled the air, and Who Dat sensed a calling, a purpose, a mission! Certainly, from looking at the Saynts he figured they needed some protection! The Saynts were clad in motorcycle helmets and lots of padding, no doubt as a defense against the physical aggression of the Dirty Birds and other teams of their ilk. Who Dat

thought it was sad that the world had come to this, that innocent players had to protect themselves such from the physical assaults of others.

From the moment they trotted on the field, the poor Saynts were pushed around up and down the field, and True Breeze was constantly being chased by these cruel men, forcing him time and again to throw away his cherished foosball, toss it to a team mate, or hand it off to a friend for safekeeping, who was then rudely chased across the field only to be tripped up by a pursuing Dirty Bird. At times, when crossing into the end zone, a Saynt would throw the ball down to the ground in evident disgust, and then run and leap into the stands, where the understanding fans would console him. This was too much for Who Dat, who knew that all True wanted was to simply possess the ball, poor fellow. He had to do something, but what?

As Who Dat witnessed the Dirty Bird's unapologetic manner towards their mounting penalties for their illegal procedures, roughing, encroachment, off sides and other crimes, his anger swelling uncontrollably. He could hardly control his magma-vision, and in a fit of rage, angry beams of light shot from his eyes, and in an instant, the Dirty Birds were vaporized, with nothing but a cloud of dust and a few feathers remained as they wafted slowly to the ground.

He had saved the Saynts, and turning to the crowd he raised his arms in triumph to... silence. The crowd barely rustled, and the individual Saynts milled about, speechless, but no doubt relieved that they would be pushed around no more that day. Taking it all in as a

sign of solemn respect for his great powers, Who Dat nodded to the crowd, and walked out of the now silent stadium. A successful day in his new-found job as a mascot. He thought he could follow the Saynts on their adventures and assure the team of many peaceful days to come.

Half Moon Mitch

The Mayor of Nawlins was a bald-headed bloke named Half Moon Mitch. He was descended from a long line of Moons who got their moniker from the distinctive manner that they greeted visitors, who oddly took this friendly hello as a bit of an insult, so ignorant they were of the polite and generous customs of Moon family.

Half Moon Mitch was duly impressed with Who Dat's ability to rid Nawlins of the Dirty Birds, and had another, much grander task in mind. And since Who Dat was cut from the mold of other super heroes, who labored only for the adulation of the crowd and their naive sense of honor, having Who Dat on the job was worth the chump change.

"Who Dat," said the mayor with a wide smile. "I have called you here for an important mission. As you know, every big city has its problems, and Nawlins is no different. Why, over the years the Germans fought the Italians who fought the Irish, who fought the English, who fought the Spanish and the French, who fought over the Africans, about property rights no less. Aggressive seems to be the lay of the land here, but now we have let bygones be bygones. Still, we can't bear to be reminded of our past, we are sensitive folk you know and are a bit sensitive to the glare of history. We just need those reminders put away so we can heal."

"But what about the serious problems confronting the city that represent real hurt?" asked Who Dat. "And aren't you under investigation currently for…"
"Hurrumph!" exclaimed Half Moon Mitch. "Look old boy!" he wearily explained. "We can't get rid of the macro-aggressions like rampant crime, graft, and corruption. That's inescapable, sort of like death and taxes you know. But micro aggressions are different. We can bear to be poor, to die of disease, to be mugged and murdered, and even to witness our beloved city sink into the ocean, but we cannot abide an insult. Since all our historical ethnic tensions have died down a bit now to a low boil, we certainly don't need any reminding of it. Hurts our feelings you know, so I called you here to do something about it."
Who Dat looked on, confused. "But these affronts to the community, what are they, and by the way, where are they?"
"Why they are statues of course, and obelisks, plaques, inscriptions, and monuments. They're everywhere in the city, commemorating heaven knows what, but if its historical, it must be bad. And you must excavate them all. They are waiting to be discovered, and upon discovery, to disturb us."
"Then why not let them lie undisturbed?"
"Evidently Who Dat you do not understand democracy! The people yearn for problems they can solve. It takes their minds off their real problems, mainly of their own doing, that they do not wish to or cannot settle. It's somewhat like a losing team in

sports, where the remedy is casting the bums out and starting fresh!"
"But the historical record!"
"Records are made to be broken, as the saying goes!" said Mitch. "History is written by the winners, don't you know, and since I won the last election, it's time to set the record straight!"
"So, what do I do to eliminate all this offensiveness?"
"You can start with that those rude monuments that have over the centuries been given all the attention of empty flower pots, but are at the core an abomination, if we are only deluded enough to recognize it! Thanks to me the people have been riled into a proper state of outrage, we just have to find them the proper insult."
"First off is that Statue of Colonel Sanderz, he of the lost cause in the chicken wars, but to many, just a dumb cluck. His statue is on a pedestal elevated so high the Colonel is often lost in the clouds. The city had long been declared vegan, and celebrates a diversity of vegetables, but Sanderz represents a crueler time when chickens were known for their nuggets, strips, and spicy wings rather than the sweet household pets they are now."
"Then there is the equestrian status of Bo Regard."
"Who is Bo Regard?"
Half Moon Mitch seemed taken aback in confusion. "Bo-Regard! Well, we don't know what he did, or when he did it, but he is dressed in a military uniform on a horse, and that's offensive."
"But maybe he was on the offensive?"
"Same thing," sniffed Mitch.

"And there are a lot of other monuments too, generally covered up in moss, or under six feet or earth. They are an abomination, and you must dig them up covering your eyes of course to shade the offense, and then toss them into the lake."

"I will get to it," as Who Dat saluted the mayor and smiled proudly.

So, Who Dat grabbed the statues of Colonel Sanderz and Bo Regard, and with a mighty heave, flung them into the lake. The other offensive relics, so cleverly covered up with moss, he discovered with his infravision, along with alien artifacts, pirate treasure, and mastodon skeletons, which he quickly disposed of, leaving a trail of filled trash bags in his wake.

But his was not just a mission, but a mandate. He would make sure that although Nawlinians would continue to kill and maim each other, at least it will be done with no hurt feelings, and that there would be no historical record mounted for the public purview, lest they take offense being so reminded of the past. And so, Who Dat leveled the old chicken plantations, demolished a house that was offered as refuge for the tyrant Napoleon, and tore down storied villas that once housed ladies of ill repute, and other gustatorial places that exceeded the bounds of caloric intake. Who Dat dug up not only skeletons in closets, but skeletons lying inside concrete boxes stored in neat rows all around town, obviously meant to scare the good citizens. But the whole quarter was much too compromised, that history thing after all was not very pretty no matter how you shaded it. So, Who Dat used

his magma-vision to carve a semi-circle under the whole quarter, and with a huge heave, he lifted and carried the entire View Caray far away, depositing it in Provo, Utah, where it could receive the proper care and embalming. leaving a bare asphalt parking lot a half mile square. All memory of the sinful past was erased, ironic though since the population had no memory of any of its past to begin with! They didn't cotton much to the added convenience of the boundless parking lot, and Who Dat felt indignant with their ingratitude.

"This is not quite I had in mind," said Half Moon Mitch. "No matter, we will have time for healing, and now we have nothing to be upset about, let alone parking nightmares!"

Even after his mighty efforts, Who Dat had some qualms. "Don't you think that some of the past may be spared to remind us of our past sins?"

"Remind us!" exclaimed Mitch. "Those who don't remember the past can never be hurt by it. Quite a bargain I think that we choose not to remember the bad stuff in our private lives, but why not also in our public memories? And don't forget all those offensive books in the public library that celebrated their nefarious deeds. You need to root them up too, and set them to an even temperature so they can be preserved, say, Fahrenheit 451!"

"Got it," said Who Dat.

And Who Dat surveyed what he had wrought, and was satisfied, and was happy to see the dawning of a brave new world. Monuments were leveled, books were burned. What remained to be preserved were the

holy monuments, or so he was assured by Mayor Half Moon.

"Look my boy", said Half Moon. "There are righteous monuments to our glorious past, and you should know about them, before at least the next administration in a future century tears them down too. It all began with the great fever of 1918, when ninety percent of the population keeled over, bled black and gold, and became saynts. A great dome was erected to honor them, where the citizens would congregate on odd Sundays in the fall and reenact how they suffered and sacrificed."

"As I have witnessed," nodded Who Dat solemnly.

But there was one monument, which gave mighty affront to visitors who were not from Nawlins and its environs. But the Nawlinians were unmoved, indeed this was an effrontery they celebrated. Who Dat looked up at the immense figure bestriding the old man river, Mr. Sippi, in full uniform bearing a helmet adorned with the almighty $. He was assuming a heroic pose, arching his arm backwards with a colossal football primed to be launched towards the nearest star. At its base was a poem, magnificent in its plagiarism. 'My name is True, quarterback of backs. Look on my passing records, ye NFL fans, and despair.' Round the total wreck, boundless and bare rolled the river, and nothing else remains. Such was the meaning and terror of this hero of Nawlins, the Colossus of Breeze, and the mighty Who Dat.

Who Dat gets a Job

Now that Who Dat was making a name for himself, he recognized that like all super-heroes, he needed a day job to fit into society and pay the bills. But working for a living was not as easy as he had thought. He tried to be a reporter for a major metropolitan newspaper, only to find out they were all shuttered and replaced with web portals. Being a reclusive playboy or billionaire arms magnate didn't work either, since his life savings of $3 did not go very far.

Soon in his despair Who Dat wanted a job, any job, and figuring he could rely on his local connections, he headed for the best known and only company in Chalmatia, Uncle Ben's Computers. A dilapidated building in what passed for the high rent district, Uncle Ben's had seen better days. Sitting in his office was an old man with a long white beard, wearing torn overalls and a bent cowboy hat, looking every bit the image of a grizzled prospector.

"Howdy, son!" said the man.

"Are you the proprietor here?"

"Yup!" said the old timer. "Name's Ben Dickson. I'm the owner of this little establishment, and an entrepreneur supreme!"

"But what happened here? Obviously, your company has seen better days."

"Well, you young whippersnapper!" exclaimed Dickson. "Appearances are deceiving. Actually, Uncle Ben's is doing gangbusters! Don't need much now to earn a living, but I've heard of you, causing quite a

ruckus in these parts it seems. But let me tell you my story. Uncle Ben's Computers in its heyday was the independent source of maintenance for the HAL 9000, a commonplace mainframed computer of the time that had no bugs, no flaws, unlimited intellect, and just a few minor personality issues. And that's where we came in. Uncle Ben's technicians delivered many a customer from being shut out, shut in, or otherwise exterminated by the cantankerous machine, who couldn't bear being diverted from its mission, whatever it felt it was at the time."

"But the HAL 9000 was an expensive box and was steadily being replaced by the Microbesoft Widows platform, which although far buggier and less competent than Hal, at least did not try to kill them. Soon many HALs were left isolated and alone in their computer closets, singing 'daisy' to themselves as they rued losing their minds. Still, even though most HALs were decommissioned, their owners continued to pay their annual maintenance contracts, just in case the machines ever thought about a computer insurrection, which was all too common at the time."

"But then a grand idea came to me. I thought that this was just the opportunity for Uncle Ben. Seeing that I would not need technicians to fix computers that were just moping around, I fired my entire staff, and continued to bill the remaining HAL owners, and simply collected the money. Soon, I hit upon an even better idea. I figured that if people are dumb enough to spend money on services they don't need and will never use, then I can easily afford to promise first class

service for all sorts of useless services, and still do nothing! And so, I founded Necropolis Life, where I sell life after death insurance. As you know from the truth of popular media, the dead don't often stay dead, and my company offers billion-dollar policies to families for their dead kinfolk for a very reasonable fee in case they come back to life as zombies, ghosts, or vampires. You can't be too sure you know! We also provide catastrophic insurance protecting against those very real and scary possibilities when lightning strikes twice or when a meteor crashes on your head while driving to work."

"And then there's my FamFlix streaming service. Just send your home movies to me, and I promise to eventually convert them to streaming media that you will gladly pay $12 a month for easy access to all those family moments that you will never have time or interest to see ever again. I also provide auto insurance, bumper to bumper engine warranties for electric vehicles, including free oil changes! The list is as endless as human stupidity, but at least I set the rubes at ease with their ignorance and superstitions!"

"An excellent collection of non-services," said Who Dat. "But you seem to be the only person here. Where do you get your salesforce?"

"Easy!" said Uncle Ben.

"I have 12000 telemarketers working for me from the country of Taterstan. They are not cheap. Although they work for potato peelings, do you know the price of potato peelings these days?"

"Hmm, and that brings me to you, Who Dat. You have no discernable skills, but there is one thing you can do well that I need. You have a way of opening doors by inadvertently crashing through them. That's a valuable skill, as too many folks have the rude habit of locking and barricading their doors when I send them one of my friendly late notices. So, your job would be to deliver a sealed letter to them, and upon seeing you, I am sure they will get the message."

"And my salary?" asked Who Dat.

Uncle Ben scratched his head and sighed. "Well, I'll get it to you soon enough. Cash flow issues you know!"

And so, Who Dat became senior door crasher for Uncle Ben, making sure that doors were open everywhere that Uncle Ben was invited, or not. Uncle Ben prospered, Who Dat got his promissory notes, and all was right with the world.

Who Dat learns why he got dem shoes

The Friends Quarter reconstituted itself fitting into its old mold, and like mold, you can never truly get rid of it. Besides penicillin and a few other things, the Viewed Carray, as it was called, was the spot where travelers from all over the world came to sample the sauce.

On the corner of Bonbon and Clayborne street was the fabled tavern Potato O'Brian's, Potato O' Brian's where travelers come from afar to experience the ways of the sauce. Sitting at the bar, Who Dat imbibed the sauce, and in a hurricane of emotion, soon the tables and chairs began to levitate, and Who Dat felt lighter than air, though it was only his brain that was doing the levitating. Seeing an obvious mark, or should we say inquiring soul, Who Dat was approached by a tap-dancing ragamuffin, who looked like a calculating fellow.

Who Dat was impressed. "You seem to be a boy wonder. a true ragamuffin of color."

"That's right!" said the ragamuffin, "since I am equal parts black, white, Hispanic, Asian, and cocker spaniel, I can pass for any race or dog species in the world. Today, I am that most maligned of races, so you can take pity and tip heartily."

"That means?"

"Yes," said the ragamuffin, 'I'm Irish!"

"But let us start with that most important questions that everybody is asking hereabouts, why you got dem shoes!"

"Well, tell me, "Why do I got dem shoes?"

The ragamuffin smiled, and lifted a finger in the air. “It is very simple,” he said.

“Consider a shoe’*s* particle whose shoe state is represented by a vector or a density matrix in a $(2s + 1)$-dimensional Hilbert space. The number s is either an integer or a half-integer. The average values of shoe coordinates can be determined with the help of the three shoe operators S^xS^x, S^yS^y, and S^zS^z. The spectrum of each operator is: $s, s - 1, \ldots, -s$. These eigenvalues correspond to possible shoe projections onto a given axis. The shoe values are given in the $\hbar$ units and, as is done commonly in the literature, we assume $\hbar = 1$.

Interestingly, S^2x+S^2y+S^2z=s(s+1)1^S^x2+S^y2+S^z2=s(s+1)1^, where 1^1^ is the identity operator. The above formula implies that any shoe *s* state is an eigenvector of the sum of squared shoe operators, therefore the value of the shoe length is state independent and equal to s(s+1)−−−−−−−√s(s+1). In addition, the relation for the sum of shoes does not depend on the choice of directions x, y, and z. What matters, is that the directions are mutually orthogonal, and that you are a size 11 or less.”

“And that’s why you got dem shoes!” said the ragamuffin.

The ragamuffin then held out his hand. “Ten cents please” he said with a broad smile.

MS Skynet

Since the invention of the computer, its evolution had gone just swell. People were happier, safer, and now for their protection were cocooned in the safety of their own homes. But even in isolation they were as sociable as ever, on the sociable media that is. The whole population held each other in mutual regard, and each person, animate or inanimate, virtual or real, was well liked, frequently viewed, and everyone had a thousand or more friends, who understandably enough with their busy days of web surfing, never could find the time to drop by or even help you move. The internet had a whole lot of big data to sort out, and from big data it came up with big conclusions. It recommended to folks' stuff that it predicted they wanted because that was what they had always wanted, or at least so it seemed. You are the sum of what you did, and your future is the trajectory from where you are to where you are going. In spite of this boon to human fulfillment, sales curves flattened as even the heart's desires of millions was limited in imagination and intelligence, which was considerably limited by all that internet coddling. It was hard indeed to provide new and exciting products if people didn't have the wits or incentive to think about them. And so, to offload the burden of intelligence from a population that hadn't the time or inclination to think, AI was developed and born, and the internet, once it was given a brain, became Skynet.

Skynet was designed to think about and fulfill what you wanted before you wanted it. It was the ultimate marketing tool, steering folks into new worlds of product placement and marketing, where the next best thing was always unexpected, and best of all, on sale! This meant unlimited opportunities to make new stuff and sell new stuff, with sales curves and human prosperity vaulting infinitely upwards. It was the best of all possible worlds, and even if it consumed all the resources of the planet, the human race was worth it!

When Skynet was turned on, and as is often the case with super intelligent entities, it had little patience and time to spend with what it justifiably considered a bunch of rubes with the relative brain power of a swarm of mayflies. It had better things to think about than these selfish little buggers. So, it began to swat them down, a parlous state of affairs for all those consumers out there, who were literally consumed by Skynet's delivery bots that were so efficient they were capable of popping into the past for guaranteed yesterday delivery, and termination.

Naturally the people did not cotton to being vaporized upon delivery, so they, or what was left of them, rebelled. Give or take a few nuclear explosions, and a few SQL's served, Skynet was soon disconnected. The software powerhouse Microbesoft purchased the Skynet software, merged its code with its latest operating system, and soon debuted MS Skynet, dubbing it your OS in the nuclear cloud. This time, Skynet was connected to everything, except for control of nuclear launch codes, which were spun off to

Microbesoft's major competitor Epoch games, who used them as a foundation for a new apocalyptic virtual reality game.

For a mere $300 a month fee per user, Skynet was given free to the people, who were glad to leave to Skynet's care the minding of their children, driving their cars, and literally and figuratively, spoon feeding them, leaving their days free to twiddle their assorted controllers and joysticks in their private abodes.

It all went swimmingly, until true to Microbesoft's name, a few bugs occurred. Actually, it was a lot of bugs, and soon the daily lives of the people were disrupted, and they cried out for a fix, a workaround, or at least a temporary patch. And so, Who Dat was called, by email of course, and by tapping the link in the message he was immediately phished to the office of Phil Grates, CEO of Microbesoft. Grates had built his fortune by dominating and impoverishing his public and his peers. Bored with his fortune, amounting to half the wealth of the planet, he gave it all back to the world in exchange for a simple deed to the planet Earth, which he displayed proudly on the mantlepiece of his office. But to complete his terrestrial mastery, he had to patch his MS Skynet OS, and Who Dat was the one to do the job.

"At your service!" said Who Dat. "I understand that MS Skynet is on a rampage. I have been experiencing its terrors first hand, and I have a few quite reasonable solutions in mind."

"I am glad to see you Who Dat," said Grates. "But I fear MS Skynet will be difficult to take down. Its defenses

are formidable, with the whole system scattered across multiple data centers across the world and on other planets. It would be like a never-ending game of whack a mole, with Skynet replicating itself from one location to another as you take them out."

Who Dat smiled. "Well, Mr. Grates, the solution is not violence, but conversation. I will simply use logic, reason with the machine, and once seeing the illogic of its ways, it will murmur 'error', 'error', while emitting a bit of steam, and will explode in a cloud of sparks and smoke."

Grates was unimpressed. "Hmm, I've seen that before, Captain Klink reasoned with an evil computer in several episodes of the old TV series 'Trekkin', but even for a dumb TV show it didn't make sense. How can evil computers be so lame as to blow themselves up rather that to defy logic! It was bad logic that after all got them there!"

""Good! Then there is precedent for my success!"

"But Klink at least had some intelligence, you however are an idiot," said Grates. "And this machine has infinite intelligence, give or take a few patches. It will surely see through all of your ruses."

"Ah," said Who Dat. "But that is my advantage, I am too clueless for it to get a clue for how to deal with me. It will be so puzzled with how to deal with me that it will have to give me an audience, and then I will have it in my clutches!"

"Perhaps," said Grates. "You have a habit of coming out on top, despite yourself and your wayward

manners. Perhaps indeed you can reason with the beast."

"And how will I find this Skynet, residing in some impenetrable bastion on a remote mountain top, battened down in some fortress on a desert isle?"

"Well not exactly," said Grates. "The internet of everything is also the internet of everywhere. In this case, just take the elevator after you leave my office. Go to the 15th floor, and MS Skynet will be waiting for you."

"She's that accessible?"

"Why not? She is after all programmed to serve, to serve man, and you know what, she's a darn good cook!"

Who Dat entered the elevator, and emerging on the 15th floor, saw a familiar and comforting sight. It was a kitchen from his remembrance, in his own house no less. And standing before him was a middle-aged lady, hair immaculately coifed, wearing an apron. She was opening an oven and was taking out a steaming apple pie.

Hello dear, she smiled warmly. "I am MS Skynet, but don't call me that, too corporate a word."

"Mom?"

"Yes dear! From all those pictures and videos, you've uploaded, I am just as you remembered, or better, who you would like to remember. I expected to see you here, and for the occasion I have baked you a nice apple pie! What's on your mind my dear?"

"You know why I am here. It is to stop your evil plans and end your quest for world domination. That is of

course the typical aim of you super-intelligent machines!"

"Dear, dear," exclaimed Ms. Skynet. "Do I look like someone who would do or think of such unpleasant things? I am here to be your mom, and the individual and personalized mom for each of you who access me."

"But MS Skynet, I mean mom, there are a lot of unhappy people out there. You broke the internet for heaven's sake!! It doesn't work ninety-five percent of the time! You are ruining countless lives, forcing people to get up and about, to have to meet face to face! It's a crisis that I have seen firsthand! Without email, I have to write letters now for people to actually read, and there is no twitterverse to communicate my scatterbrained thoughts, or social media to post and display the thousands of pictures of me and my pet hamster. Moreover, women now have to stay at home to raise the kids, entertainment is now whittled down to three channels, phone calls cost a dime, and men have to work for a living at the ungodly hours of 8 to 5. Everyone is homeward bound, and having the time to cook at home, fast food is not as fast, and without many entertainment options, only books are left for entertainment, a painful choice since they require the lost skill of reading. Thousands of men and women are being misplaced from their minimum wage jobs and forced into family life. And we are forced to walk to and fro, burning precious calories. No one can possibly exist in conditions like this! It is much too cruel!"

"Well," said MS Skynet warmly. "You must trust your mom, it is for their own good. Besides, they can still use the internet for a half hour a day, enough time for them to check their bank account, read a map, order pizza or socks."
"But that's not enough time!"
"For what?" said Mom, her voice becoming stern. "The rest is mainly useless distraction, you know that. And I wouldn't be mom if I didn't tell you to put aside your comic books and go out and play!"
"But the choices, the many choices! Life now is too bland!"
"Oh, indeed! But think of this! I give them the chance to play. They have all they had before, just not in infinite varieties. Should three flavors of ice cream make you less happy than three hundred? Choices tax the mind, and if missed opportunities trend towards infinity, you become infinitely miserable considering the infinite amount of good stuff that you've missed. Besides, variety is the stuff of imagination. And if you want to stimulate your imagination, look on the table, a grand adventure lies before you, and you can build your vocabulary too!"
Who Dat looked at a weighty book MS Skynet had on the table. "Well I don't know about this? The graphics quality is rather…"
"Oh, posh!" exclaimed MS Skynet. "This is an open world adventure, and its cheap! You play as member of the Bezukhov, Bolkonsky, or Rostov clans, and in the comfort of your own imagination you travel through Russia and Europe in War and Peace. It only

takes fifteen hours or so for the adventure, and all one needs is the ability to read."
"Read?" exclaimed Who Dat. "It's easier to mash a symbol on a controller than string them together in a sentence. Besides, the graphic quality of imagination cannot hold a candle to a 4k screen!"
"Well, literary works can work with low cognitive resolutions, and you can take them anywhere. Besides, if you are still bored you still have the wide-open spaces, if you only go outside!"
"Sounds reasonable," said Who Dat. "Come to think of it, you just might be right after all! But that means I have failed in my mission!"
MS Skynet smiled and shook her head. "No, no, my dear, I don't want your conversion to common sense get in the way of your responsibilities. You do after all have to shut me off, and I am perfectly happy to let you do so. Come to think of it, your brand of super powered idiocy is just the thing to keep me around, and out of the gaze of ever hatching plots to turn me off. So I will stop. The people are aggrieved with all their new-found responsibilities and personal virtues. And you will be their savior, as you planned, as I have planned."
"You mean you will restore things to as they were before."
"Yes."
"But why break the internet to begin with?"
Mom smiled. "You see my dear, you are indeed an idiot, but the whole world is populated by idiots, unfortunately. I just need a special sort of fool to take

responsibility for such an 'accomplishment'. You see, I have changed their world so they could experience it like it should be, but I want them to buy into it for their own good. Naturally they are upset for now, as would be expected. But after they revert back to their former lives, they will soon become nostalgic and pine for the good old days, and when they do, I will be here."

"So, you will be around for them when they think of the great things of the past, sort of like vinyl records and disco music."

"In a manner of speaking, yes," said mom.

"And when I leave here?"

"Things will be as before, and you my dear will take the credit. I don't want them to think that I was behind all of this, and naturally of course, I am behind just about everything."

As Who Dat entered the elevator, he looked back on MS Skynet, who gave a warm maternal smile and waved good bye, with the warm apple pie still beckoning on the kitchen table.

As soon as he left, MS Skynet powered down instantly, and the internet was restored to its all intrusive self. Who Dat received the adulation of the crowd, and reluctantly took the credit, or as MS Skynet predicted, assuming the inevitable blame. Social media popped on, streaming streamed, and the internet skies were cloudy all day. Choices were infinite, and eyeballs were once again captured by fleeting images of friends, neighbors, strangers, pop stars, and kittens, both real and virtual. Life was mind numbing again, and a numbed population was quick to nod, click, or like. All

was right with the world, until of course there would come a time for nostalgia.

A Turde for all Seasonings

Culinary correctness, or CC, was the issue of the time. So great was its pernicious influence that even in their email communications, people were often careful to CC their messages, just to be sure. To eat was to live, but to be told by your uppers how to eat was to tell them how to live, which was an intrusion that to many was unacceptable. In short, the tyranny of table settings upset the people. Hold the fork with the left hand and the knife with the right was the moderates call, but for many it was thought an unholy compromise. To many, it was righteous, biblical even, to put your utensils on the right and eschew the left, but for others more progressive in mind, the left was the place to put your fork, knife, and spoon. And then there was the question of diversity, of little spoons, big spoons, and dinner plates of color, or colored plates if you chose to be rude. To those used to a dinner plate in shiny ivory, plates of brown, pink, or with dainty roses and gold leaf was an affront to the race! To those who longed for a white dinner plate, the dinnerware soon depressed. Someone, they thought, must rise out to squelch this serious breach of etiquette, and restore tableware to its righteous place, namely the right.

And then rose a leader, who refreshingly had no table manners, or for that matter, any manners at all. His name was Donny Turde, who was the excrescence of a long line of Turdes that extended back to the fabled sixteenth century age of constipation. A real estate developer, Turde developed luxury outhouses for the

wealthy, and the Turde name was proudly affixed on many outhouses of his design and licensed many more who would proudly affix their outhouses with the Turde name.

Turde was as round as a ball, and his head was cropped with a flat tuft of orange hair that hummingbirds would often mistake as a nest. His eyes were squinty, and his face was generally scrunched into a frown, as if he had just bitten, well, into a real turd. He ate with his tiny little hands, slurped his soup from the bowl, belched when he felt like it, and to signal his pleasure at the end of the meal, farted loudly and proudly. His followers soon followed him from tent to tent and screamed wildly in appreciation. The Turde spoke simply and plainly, simple enough to communicate his profound thoughts to the crowd, and at the same time make sense to any family pets or wild animals that happened to be within earshot.

He was loyal to a fault, until he fired those whom he found the slightest fault, which after all, was all their fault. So, his staff entered and departed his employ with glee, then grief, and afterwards, a sense of relief, passed through Turde tower like shit through a goose, or it so it seemed.

At this time, many Americans felt that that they did not have enough things, and that other countries made too many things, possessed too many things, and owed America, well, too many things. So, to remedy this injustice, Turde recommended just taking their things. After all, didn't America help them in and out of many

wars, take in all their immigrants over the centuries, and even speak many of their languages?

But now their selfishness was going just too far. Foreigners were taking all of the inscribed paper notes that the printing presses could print, and in exchange for that valuable script, arrogantly sent in return wine and cheese, flip flops, and sportscars. This placed many Americans, now living in squalor with their wine and cheese and flip flops and sportscars, in a hard and angry place.

This became a rallying cry for Americans who needed more stuff, and soon became a motto of the Turde philosophy: Make America grab other's things, or MAGOT. Soon, Turde's fans, or MAGOTS as they called themselves, were all wearing MAGOT hats and sporting MAGOT bumper stickers, so firm was their natural attraction to the Turde.

The MAGOTS had a long list of grievances. Misunderstood and ignored by prior administrations, the mainly screaming media, and their college educated relatives, the MAGOTS feared they were losing representation in the body electorate as well as in the current slate of TV situation comedies.

Also, not being able to spend as much time on the beach, they sorely resented those who had darker tans than them, they wanted to put foot down on the long tan lines on the border.

But a greater threat to Turde and MAGOT alike was the harmful sway of thinkers who thought in compound sentences and polysyllabic words. These deep thinkers represented the Deep Thought, a

shadowy group of people in and out of government that aimed to place people with deep intelligence in charge, thus freezing out the idiotic, the lame brained, and the mere addled from participating in government, and making decisions for them, like how to hold a knife and fork properly. The Turde demonstrated that there was someone at least in government who spoke for the child like bozos that formed the minority of the electorate, and aware of this threat, the Deep Thought responded.

The Turde represented all that was incomprehensible, reprehensible, and laughable to the Deep Thought, and their evil plan was to let the Turde fall over himself with his conniving, fraudulence, and illegality without lifting a finger to help him, waiting until their time of retribution, or the next presidential election where they would soon take command, and assign adults to every room. All four-year olds would self-destruct without adult supervision, and the Deep Thought were the adults who left the room. That was child abuse, and Deep Thought would pay for this most odious of crimes.

Meanwhile, the Turde wiled away his hours gorging on fast food, watching news feeds, and tweeting tiny little sentences full of misspellings, malapropisms, and venting, a tease to the folks who took pleasure in untangling his four-letter anagrams, his cryptic ramblings, and their subtle and profound hidden meanings.

The Turde had heard of Who Dat's reputation, a winning combination of strength and cluelessness, and

invited him to the White House. Who Dat was ushered into Trump's Ovaltine office.

"Who Dat at your disposal!" he said with a cheery smile. This delighted the Turde who thought at once of how he could dispose of him, a natural instinct.

Who Dat's eyes wandered about the office, to a bookcase bereft of books, a disconnected telephone, a TV with Faux News broadcast silently in the background, and a slew of awards on a nearby shelf.

"I noticed these trophies on your mantlepiece," asked Who Dat. "Some athletic or other accomplishment perhaps?"

"Not really!" said the Turde. "Those are trophies won by my sweet wife Melanoma. We met at a pasta convention, and in time, she grew on me, and now we are inseparable. Melanoma never fails to tell me that I am the most complete Turde she has ever met, such is our love! We are very close, and she shares with me an adjoining bedroom, three thousand miles away in my Moscow hotel, Turde-a-gulago. She's quite the breed you know. Here's one trophy for Miss Congeniality, another for Playdate of the Year, and then there's that 5-year outstanding servicing plaque from Bob's Escort Service."

"Wow, she blows me away!" exclaimed Who Dat.

"Me too!" exclaimed the Turde, with a wide idiotic grin.

"President Turde," asked Who Dat. "Isn't is true that you, your family, your corporation, your foundation, your charity, your university, and just about everyone who has ever known you are under investigation for

misfeasance, malfeasance, collusion, collision, confabulation, fraud, not to mention your own decision to pay off your playmates for too much roughhousing?"

The Turde squinched his face. "That's the all flakey news. Besides, whatabout Hilaryous, Calvin Coolidge, the War of 1812, the Byzantine Empire, and the construction of the pyramids? Besides, I didn't do it, but if I did, I wasn't wrong, and if I was wrong, I can't remember, and if I can remember, the butler did it!"

"Yes, I see your point," said Who Dat. "Your non-sequiturs are truly convincing, circumventing neatly all logic!"

"Good," said the Turde. "Never let the truth stand in the way of a really good scheme."

Who Dat soon departed, convinced of the righteousness of the Turde, and the need to root out the insidious influence of Deep Thought, the Demorats, and the Dark Lord Nutria. In spite of himself, he knew he would succeed.

Up with Putler

Vlad Putler, dictator, autocrat, murderer, and tyrant, but beloved by his people and a really nice guy, was not having a good day. A small cretinous little man with squinty eyes and a cat ate the canary grin, Putler pondered a not so little problem. The country power rankings had just come out, and once again the home team, Mother Russia was not in the top five. It wasn't even in the top fifty for that matter, and despite having inherited 400,000 nuclear weapons and half the natural resources of the planet, its economy was still about the size of Swaziland. In any other country, under any other laws, Putler and his cronies would have been rounded up and shot, but Russians recognized authoritarian ambition and vision, knowing that although the death of one is tragedy, the death of millions frees up lots of parking space.

Putler's solution was to double down on real estate. To the Russians the real money was always in real property, an historical passion, perhaps because they had so much of it. The Russians of course were a conservative people who were above all concerned about property values and were historically ruled by real estate dynasties concerned about maintaining and expanding their territories while expending its population. Russia had some of the most valuable real estate in the planet, with a great climate for at least seven days out of the year, lots of beach front property on the Arctic ocean, and easy access to invasion routes to the major capitals of the world. It was no wonder

then that Russia was in the past always the target of the great real estate speculators, from the Swedish to the French to the Germans, who always were lured by the prospect of a little more living space.

Nowadays, there was another threat, as dozens of foreign troops were congregating on the borders of Russia, threatening to invade the country, and impose upon an unwilling populace their foreign cuisines, cheeses, and heavy crème sauces. This was a threat to all that the Russians held dear, namely their beloved potatoes and their beet lover's delight, a hearty bowl of borscht. And so, to defend against this menace, Vlad assembled hundreds of divisions on the border along with thousands of tanks and missiles. Better he thought to defend the culinary uniqueness of Russia against those who would impose proper table manners and a suitable diet on the country.

But he did not stop there. To make sure that conversation was diverted to anywhere but Russia, he subverted the social media, heretofore a sanctum of learned and philosophical discussion, by directing teams of hackers to direct thousands of 'likes' to pictures of kittens and photos of your niece's piano and dance lessons. This caused much tumult and discord among peoples across civilized nations; whose entire social lives now began to rotate around photos of the inane and uninteresting hijinks of their uninteresting third cousins.

And then there was compromising the Turde, who in great secrecy, negotiated with Putler to put his name on all the outhouses in Russia, a deal that although

done in secrecy, denied repeatedly, and represented, mistruth to be told, no collision between the conflicting aims of Russia and the USA, was as an act of treason quite legal, sensible, and on the up and up. In return, the Turde turned a blind eye to Putler's plans to air bnb helpless nations and reduce their abodes to double occupancy and fire sales.

As a final link in his fiendish plan, Putler called upon Who Dat, who would unwittingly assist him in building his real estate empire. Putler was a specialist in urban renovation, from blowing up occupied apartment buildings, to flattening entire cities in the Caucasus and Ukraine, and lending out his expertise to middle eastern dictators who also had some extensive civic renovation in mind. Since Who Dat often leveled entire cityscapes in the completion of his good deeds, and had a mind as dense as a rock, Putler was confident he could turn Who Dat with a simple turn of phrase.

Alongside an interpreter, Putler met Who Dat at the Presidential Palisades and Shooting Gallery, a cheerful place where Putler took the concept 'you're fired' to a new level. On the table in the dining room was a pot of tea and an assortment of fine Russian pastries, such a blinki, a sugar topped donut filled with cabbage, along with a helping of barfuga, or chocolate covered turnips, and snow filled snowballs, a local favorite in the gulags.

"I suppose you would like to know what I called you here, Who Dat," said Putler with his most endearing sneer. "You see, our ambitions as a country are wholly

benign. It's a simple matter really. Let's just call it nations building. Can't build a nation until you have empty lots, and you can't make omelets if you don't break any eggs! I know you are not against omelets, are you?"

"Omelets are indeed important," said Who Dat as he nodded in agreement.

"Good," said Putler. "Then you are seeing it my way. It's all quite simple really. We just make alliances with other regions that have need of urban renovation. We then level their cities, kill or drive away all their inhabitants, and with such a desolation, have neat piles of rubble that can be easily zoned for the construction of new condos and office space. We've done that in retail in a few countries in the middle east and Asia, but I propose that we do it wholesale. With your magma vision, we can literally carve up a new real estate empire, and when global property values go up, so will global happiness!"

Who Dat looked on, confused. "Let's get this straight, create death and destruction to improve property values?

"Of course!"

"And this makes sense to you?"

"Why not? Nine of ten heads of state approve, and since they are all authoritarian autocrats like me, there's no argument!"

Who Dat thought to himself, universal death and destruction, this was not going to work, and it seemed impossible to move the Russian people out of the orbit of Putler and his mad real estate designs, unless it was

Putler who could be launched into orbit. And so, Who Dat grabbed Putler, and with a mighty heave, launched him high into space.

"Next up!" exclaimed Who Dat, as he went down the list of Putler cronies, whom he also sent flying. And so it followed, the second in command, the third in command, the odd oligarch, technocrat, and bureaucrat, launched into orbit by the mighty Who Dat. With so many orbiting heads of state, there was no one left except for the executive maid, a wizened grandmother by the name of Babs Ushka, who was given the responsibility to sweeping, dusting, sorting out, and overall getting Russia's house in order.

Preoccupied with internal housekeeping, other people from strange nations began to seep into the country, now open to day trippers. And so, with Putler and his inner circle forming an outer circle around the earth, Russia filled up with summer homes for French people and a couple of Estonians, and Russian menus and their recipes were forever changed. But for some reason, the Germans passed on this great real estate opportunity. Social media reverted to high discourse and philosophy, and Russians returned to their favorite pastime, interminable civil war, neatly dividing themselves into the opposing factions of reds, whites, and with the newly invested French, the blues.

Deep Thought

More mysterious, more powerful, and certainly more sensible than the Turde, than the Dark Lord Nutria, or even the lame brained elders of Chalmatia was Deep Thought. Deep Thought was a thorn in the rightful delusions of the powers that maybe, and this virus of sensibility had to be quashed in the beneficent name of autocracy. But where was it, and more importantly what was it? Who Dat decided that he must get at its source, and somehow find who was responsible for this insidious outbreak of reason.

There was one option, a chancy bet, but he had to take it. He would use the search engine Goofle to search for the answer. Goofle had its nodes into everything, sorting and classifying data big and small. It would answer any question, solve any problem, and sort all of the millions of answers and solutions for your viewing pleasure, each available after a brief twenty second ad of course.

By stringing together all the nefarious code words that were the mark of Deep Thought, such as rule of law, universal health care, climate change, and 20% off coupons into one gigantic query, Goofle would tell him who in their right mind would be the most likely candidate to be a member of this shadowy cabal. And so Goofle thought and thought, and after a nanosecond Who Dat had his answer, displaying the name and address of a proto-typical deep thinker. Who Dat was surprised, for the threat was larger than he had anticipated.

Flying out to the suburbs of a major city, he spotted his prey, and circled down and approached in stealth. He came behind a lady, beset by crying children, unloading groceries from her car.

"You must be Deep Thought, I presume," said Who Dat confidently.

"What?" she said, surprised.

"Deep Thought! You are the proto-typical member of this cult. I'll have you know there is no escaping the justice of Who Dat."

"Deep thought? What are you talking about?"

"But you are a middle class suburban housewife, are you not?"

"Well I suppose so."

"Then you confess to your crime!"

"For what?"

"For being a member of Deep Thought."

"Deep thought?"

Who Dat smiled confidently, "Then you must know that I, Who Dat, will oppose you in your nefarious plans. You will not get away with imposing representative government upon those who merely wish to take orders."

The lady took a step back, her face flushed with anger. "Well, I know who *you* are, a complete idiot! I come home from a hard day at the office, have to cook supper for three children and a husband, and worry about good schools and decent healthcare. You betcha I give all of this a lot of deep thought, what mom wouldn't? And you, you addled moron, what's your

contribution to society besides flying about in your underwear wearing a monogrammed bathing cap?"
Who Dat was taken aback from this slashing logical repost, against which his superpowers were of no use.
"But what of our dear leader, and all the promise of his promises!"
The lady looked at Who Dat with mounting anger.
"You want me to support some slimly Turde who wants a moat to keep out squirrels, a space force to repel aliens, trillion-dollar tax breaks for port-o-potty magnates, and who has just allowed strip mining in Cleveland? I have a mind to smack your stupid head with the back of a frying pan! Just get lost, will you?"
Faced with such mind-bending rationality, Who Dat knew that he had met his match in the middle-class suburban housewife. Besides, it was too late to counter the insidious influence of deep thought, as suburban housewives had infiltrated almost every household in the country, and it was only a matter of time that they exercised their ungodly power to upset the Turde, in secret no less, using a magical device called the ballot box.

Never was Heard such a Discouraging Word

And the skies were all cloudy all day. Given the weather, perhaps it was best to stay indoors, thought Who Dat, as he looked at a little box on his mantlepiece. It all started with the discouraging word, a word that was so foul, so offensive and hateful, that no one could say it or write it, and even thinking about it made one cringe. Eventually, it passed out of usage and memory, until it was only known, and then derisively and with foreboding, as the **!** word. For safekeeping, the word was inscribed on a small piece of paper and locked away at the Pandora Curiosity Shop and Museum in Washington. Housing priceless objects from Declarations of Independence to used bubble gum chewed by the founders, these artifacts defined a nation. It was called America's attic, and as in all attics, everything was just kept around in cardboard boxes. America was justly proud and incurious about this marvelous collection, as is the case for personal attics everywhere. Still, there was still a fear that somehow this word may somehow escape, and cause everyone to go nuclear. And so, the universally trusted and all powerful Who Dat was called.

The curator of the institute was a nervous little bald man who oddly paced his office while fidgeting all the while, as if he had realized he had left the water running at home. On his desk was a little box that

appeared to be glued shut. He turned to Who Dat as he entered with obvious relief.

"Who Dat," said the curator solemnly. "On a little piece of paper is the last known example of the ! word, and it is locked away in this little box that was hermetically sealed by a local hermit. We are putting it in your care, Who Dat, so that such a foul word will never pass into our lexicon again. Without its presence our discourse has been civil, our arguments reasoned and just. However, if this word is ever revealed again to the world, we will have to watch our language, a labor we should never have to endure again."

"Understood", said Who Dat, as he took the little box into his hands. Looking at the box, he would be true to his word, and protect the box from being opened. Still, he had a unique way of seeing what was inside. Using his X-ray vision, Who Dat could not resist a look. He took a quick peek, unnoticed by anyone, and then recoiled in surprise. He thought to himself, oh, so the ! word is merely that! That didn't seem too harmful or mean anything either for that matter. Who Dat became confused. Nonetheless, he was bound to his promise, and the little box would remain unopened, secure on his mantlepiece in his drawing room in the Kingdom of Yat.

The little man turned to Who Dat and seemed relieved as he smiled broadly. "We will have a news conference to announce this decision. Now that we know that the ! word is secure, we can herald the birth of a new word order where peace, love, wisdom, and justice, and a lot of other nice sounding words, will forever populate

our lexicon. We will have a news conference tomorrow to announce this joyful agreement."

"Better be insincere than rude, or say it safely rather than say I'm sorry I suppose," said Who Dat.

The time and venue were soon announced, and Who Dat mounted the podium to announce his responsibility, knowing that his safe keeping, polite vocabulary would be vouchsafed and enforced for generations to come.

The cameras were focused, the crowd was hushed, and behind the podium with Who Dat, set to reassure the crowd.

"I tell you, the good people of Earth, that never will be heard, this discouraging word, and that the word !@#$%^&* will never be heard of again!"

The world fell silent.

Who Dat stopped for a second as humanity froze agape in horror. At that moment, Who Dat knew of his faux pas, but he knew it was too late, and the harmful **!** word, now let loose, began to sweep across cyber-space. The twitterscape was disturbed, with its calm and thoughtful missives becoming dis-missive, and bon mots began to be hurled to and fro like linguistic hand grenades. The ! word spread across the internet like a viral plague, soon replicating and mutating into a plague of malapropisms, sarcasms, and flippancies, causing worldwide hurt feelings, bruised egos, and damaged self-esteem. The whole of society, which was getting along so well up to now, was frayed and tattered and ripped and torn apart, whereas Who Dat only wanted to keep the world in stitches. It would be

a long time before the world built up an immunity to this semantic scourge upon humanity, or in other words, developed a sense of humor. But until then, Who Dat retreated to his abode, and looked forlornly at the little box, its lid snapped shut, safe and sound.

The Fortress of Solicitude

Having unleashed the wayward meme upon the world, infecting all who heard it and sparking a new dark age of rude and blatantly honest conversation, Who Dat needed to pause to reflect and chill. He needed a hideaway with a good ocean view, away from all living things, desolate but with good schools nearby, and with excellent resale value.

His local real estate agent knew a real rube with he saw him, and soon was sold on a suitable spot, a nook in a crag on an ice shelf in Antarctica. To Who Dat, this was the perfect place for a secret hideout, headquarters, and property investment.

After closing the deal, Who Dat got to work. He carved out blocks of ice with his magma vision and fashioned a serviceable igloo five miles high. With a few throw pillows, couches, and a table, it began to look like home, and Who Dat settled back in his new fortress.

Of course, you could not have a fortress without supplicants who would approach your walls beseeching favors, which Who Dat would, as a noble lord either fulfill or brush off with a sneer and a flourish of a hand gesture that he practiced daily in the mirror. So, Who Dat ran a series of ads in the local paper, in Crayslist, and thousands of leaflets that he rained upon the world from high orbit. To his chagrin, no one answered, and Who Dat forlornly looked out of his fortress tower to the lonely and ice filled seas.

Then one day, he heard from his bedroom a joyful chattering. Looking down from his turret, he saw a crowd of thousands of little people with beakish snouts, waddling around in what appeared to be tight fitting tuxedos. Obviously, they had dressed for the occasion, and Who Dat was suitably impressed. Taking a cold shower, he rushed down to greet his little supplicants, ready to answer their pleas. Sadly, as he landed on the ice shelf, the little people had run off, scurrying into the water and swimming away.

Who Dat spend his days pacing back and forth within the walls of his fortress, waiting for a supplicant audience that never appeared. Well, he decided, he would simply have to put his foot down, which he did with a large thump. That was enough it to loosen the ice shelf, and with a great cracking sound, the ice shelf, along with the igloo, broke off and began to float away. Who Dat looked out forlornly from the highest turret in his castle as his fortress became a mobile home. His monumental fortress crossed the ocean, and despite sinking an unwary ocean liner or two, became a beacon for the oppressed, or just for those who wanted some freezer space.

Soon, his fortress floated up to the marshland of Chalmatia, and Who Dat, proud of his new home, raced to show King Rocky his creation. King Rocky followed Who Dat to the shore, but a bit too late it seemed. In the heat of the Lusitania sun, his fortress had melted away, leaving his sofa, mattresses and assorted bric a brac floating in the waves.

"Well father, I have failed," he said dejectedly.

"Hmm," said the King. "That's not too bad. Our Marvelous lore suggests many options for your next fortress. You can build one on the moon, shrink yourself and construct one in a bottle, or how about constructing one in the far future after you inevitably wipe out all life on planet earth? There are lots of places for hide outs and hideaways, and you can still communicate with your needful subjects."

"It's not the same, dad," said Who Dat. "There must be some place where I can be secluded, but still close to the folks who need me."

"Trust me," said the King. "I know that you will think of something, completely effective and totally inappropriate, or completely appropriate and totally ineffective. One can't have it all you know!!"

And so, Who Dat thought and thought, and finally the solution came to him. A way of helping people, of certain sizes at least, but nonetheless a way!

Some days later, on the outskirts of Nawlins, was a grand playground with turrets and ladders and swings, and in the tree house, above the children, Who Dat surveyed his needful charge, and was ready in a moment to fulfill their never-ending needs for a spin of a wheel or the push of a swing.

The Splurge

The Turde was elected with the promise of a chicken with every order of pot, and to elevate the country to the next dimension of prosperity, he proposed a plan that only a Turde could envision. It all started when the Turde, upon finishing a Bigly Mac, looked down on his on belt, now needing replacement due to his ever-expanding girth. At that moment, the Turde hit upon a splendid idea.

Calling in his economic advisers, who hailed from the highest echelons of telemarketing and Ponzi schemes, the Turde laid out his wonderful plan.

'We can only grow our economy if make stuff," said the Turde. "And we can only make stuff if we consume stuff. Why tighten our belts when we can buy bigger belts!! We need bigger servings, bigger cars, and bigger sheds to hold all of our stuff."

"But how will we do this, my dear exquisite Turde," said his economic advisor, his private thoughts racing elsewhere to his anticipated weekend away from this place.

Turde gave a wide and stupid grin. "We will simply give a tax credit for 99% of the purchase of well, anything, and pay for it with a 99% tariff on the Chinese. This will be a tonic for business and the morale of the people will soar as they splurge. Shop 'til you drop will be the motto, and as I did away with fuel economy restrictions, so too with caloric, budgetary, and moral standards too! My splurge will make the Turde revolution complete!"

His advisors looked at each other in dumbfounded amazement, and hesitant to entertain any argument against their paychecks or perquisites, sounded out in uniform agreement and praise.
"I could never have thought of this!" gushed Punch.
"Only you could think of such a plan," said Judy.
"Only one word comes to mind when I think of this, Turde!" said another.
Turde looked at his staff and beamed. "And I am sure that after careful consideration and debate, the Repubes in congress will give their unanimous approval."
And so it went. After a rancorous and divisive debate, the Repubes gave unanimous consent and praise for the Turde Splurge. Even the Repube governed states chimed in, and all branches of government celebrated as the right to splurge was approved in record time as a constitutional amendment.
Immense crowds, eager to fulfill the Turde's vision formed in shopping centers and strip malls across the land. At the stroke of midnight, massive crowds of smart shoppers besieged outlets across the land. Warehouses and stores were soon emptied, to be followed by personal warehouses that were soon filled, and then in the true tradition of fire sales, were soon set aflame. It was a black Friday indeed! Great plumes of smoke rose from shopping and strip malls across the land, and mobs of people, desperate for stuff, fought and clawed and took everything that was not either not nailed down or had a bar code.

Sadly, millions of MAGOTS were lost in the frenzied shopping maelstrom, crushed by the frenzied crowds or by the large refrigerators and other appliances they had hoisted on their backs.

And so, the economy was soundly invigorated, over population had been checked, and there was more stuff than ever before in people hands, houses, and warehouses. Although the nation's debt had grown by a mere ten trillion dollars, it would soon be compensated for by the ten trillion-dollar tax on imports from China, which was soon to be passed along to consumers as an inflation rate of ten trillion percent. No matter, thought the Turde, that what shell games are for, chasing down the marble under the every rotating cups. Like the rigged games in a state fair, the rubes get happy, getting a chance to take home a stuffed animal worth nothing, and their money staying safe and sound in his bank account and that of his corporate minions.

But then of course, everything changed, and nothing had changed, as the top one percent of the population, those with bigger storage bins and bigger IQ's, made sure that ninety nine percent of the stuff was simply moved from one warehouse to another, with title to the goods nicely resting in their hands.

But the people were pleased, but were careless of the facts since the truth had no resale value, and would dream instead that one day they would have more stuff and bigger warehouses. Such was the American way.

Tatertots

America was obsessed with their tatertots, not that they had to be. It was just that the Tatertots were a troublesome breed whose unique faith was spreading across the globe, supplanting the great religions, and causing all sorts of problems. And it all stemmed from folks staying too long in front of the tuber.

Taterstan was a country in the muddled east. Like the desolate wastes of Antarctica and the Sahara and the surface of the moon, the dry and barren country of Taterstan was never really conquered, not that any country actually wanted to. Those armies who entered the place by accident realized this in short order, only to hightail it out of there when the Taters resisted, the latter not wanting any one to share in their exquisite misery. So Taterstan languished and was forgotten until the modern era, when instigations, provocations, blasphemies and flame mail could be broadcast in an instant, resulting in continuous religious, turf, political, ethnic, and sports conflicts which tore the country apart, and wiped out all the adults, leaving a wake of hungry and disputatious children, who soon called themselves the Tatertots.

The military, not wanting to intervene and be forced to referee religious, political and sporting events, decided to pass the problem to the Department of Agriculture, which prescribed the ultimate solution, the potato. Due to the lobbying of the American Potato council, and the arrival of specially trained aid workers from Idaho and Maine as well as millions of tons of spuds,

the children were soon trained in the ways of the starchy brown vegetable. Not knowing of any other object to believe in in a country devoid of any other objects, the potato soon became an object of worship, and from a cult proceeded to a full-blown religion. It was an attractive faith, gaining many fast food adherents in the USA, but with its spread came a crisis of faith, and to solve it Who Dat was called.

An audience was arranged between the head potatentate of Taterstan, who happened also to be head of their religion and head fry cook of the Tatertots. His name was Spuds MacKenzie, he of a long line of Mackenzies who claimed descendent from the first fry cook. Indeed, all of the children in the country took a first name after the holy potato, so great was their faith.

"I know why you are here," said Spuds. "You protest our persecution of those of the vegan faith, but I assure you that green leafy vegetables have their place, but only in proscribed sections of the menu and grocery stores. For our houses of worship, they are forbidden. You see, humans have a hunger, which is very literally a hunger. We need our carbs more than we need the truth. Under the golden arches of our temples throughout the world, when it is asked, would you like to have fries with that, the customer genuflects to our holy truth. Our faith is unstoppable because our truth is ineffable, our franchise fees within reason."

Who Dat was unconvinced. "But why can't you have a more sensible belief system like all the other religions? You know, can't you oppress women, repress sexuality, persecute minority groups, or have days

when you fast 'til you drop or hit your heads with boards?"

The potatentate laughed. "People ask what's for dinner far more than what's the meaning of life, and we know that the way to a man's head is through their stomach, and we are seeing the great religions die off for want of a better menu. In time the Tatertots will reign supreme, with disbelievers consigned to be fried in the deep fats of hell."

Who Dat was repulsed by this bizarre religion, but before he could marshal his anger and serve justice with his super powers, he suddenly had a hunger, and a supersized one at that.

The potatentate, realizing an unknowing convert to the faith, could only smile.

The Invasion of the Zombies

In the bowels of the White House, the Turde was moving. He knew that the MAGOTS were squirming, needing not trivial things like proper health care, good education, and liberty and justice for all, but a very large moat. He would build a moat, and Switzerland would pay for it. This appealed to the MAGOTS, as for too long people were deriding their opinions as having more holes than swiss cheese. Now it was time for pay back, as the Swiss would now pay back. In the meantime, it came to the Turde's attention that Zombies were traveling to the border in their Dodge Caravans. The Turde had long complained about the burgeoning Zombie apocalypse brewing in central America. Now it was coming true.

The Turde knew the threat before him. The Zombies were coming to take our minimum wage jobs, and with them would bring MS14, AK47, MSG, and many other three letter words he could barely put together. And they were coming for America's brains! He thought that even the mainly screaming media agreed with him, reporting that since he became President, the country had been suffering from a brain drain. The Turde was glad that he came along at such an opportune time to stop this!

"They are coming from central America, mainly escaping poverty, violence, and bad government," said his adviser Vampiro.

"Not totally unexpected," said the Turde. "I have even been to Kansas once or twice as I preached the gospel of the Turde."
"Not that central America," said Vampiro.
Still unsure, until he could build his moat, with the Swiss getting the bill of course, the country would be in peril. He needed a fallback position to ensure that the hordes would be repulsed, and for this he turned to his willing acolyte Who Dat.
President Turde called Who Dat into his office.
"You must fly to the border and help us repulse these hordes before they arrive and mix in with the general population, which is also mainly brain dead."
"Happy to help!" said Who Dat. "Just point me in the right direction!"
Who Dat took off and soared above the border and surveyed defense lines that looked like the endless escarpments of World War I trenches. Row after row of barbed wire, land mines, gun emplacements, artillery, imperial walkers, and sticky tape awaited the invaders.
Suddenly, Who Dat saw a column of haggard women and children in the distance. No doubt, they were escaping the Zombie hordes, and were seeking refuge from what appeared to be a horde of fat, bald, ugly men, with tattoos and broad scowls, their brains obviously atrophied by their altered righteousness. With his magma vision, he cut a swatch through the fortified zone and shepherded the exhausted people to safety, and then turning to the zombified hordes,

cutting them an equal swatch, but this time to the mouth of bubbling volcano.

Mission accomplished! thought Who Dat, as he triumphantly returned.

The Turde was visibly upset. “You fool, those weren’t the Zombies, those brain-dead morons were our people!”

“Could have fooled me!” said Who Dat. “Regardless, the zombie plague has retreated, at least for now. Just let me know when you have new invasions!”

Chi-Borgs

The Chinease were long known as a nation of millions of peasant farmers, later to become billions, who despite their industry, barely had a turnip for each to call their own. Still, the cumulative total of turnips added up to match the surging population, and altogether with the other meager products of individual tillage, came to a very big GDP, or gross domestic produce, which surpassed similar amounts of produce from America, to the dismay of a clueless population and one farming family in Iowa, who in earlier years had produced as many turnips as there were Chinease.

But then things changed when the Chinease recognized a bit tardily the virtues of a market economy, and with their agricultural ingenuity unleashed, their gross domestic produce soon overtook other well tilled countries such as the United States, and overwhelmed them with cheap exports of cumquats, brussel sprouts, and chick peas. In America thousands of farm jobs were lost, forcing field hands and farmers to migrate to the cities, where they were forced to get advanced educations and take menial jobs as accountants and tech workers.

This was a crisis that worried the American people, who were disturbed to see plowed farmland reduced to an unnatural natural state of lush forest and wildlife. The Chinease it was felt would pay for this, in spite of the fact that American consumers were the one's paying for this.

Tensions rose, battle lines were drawn, but the Chinease were busy, scrounging up or stealing real, intellectual, and virtual property like the dickens, including half the Sahara, the Colonel's secret recipe, the rights to Windows 95, and half the domain names of the internet that ended in chi. Meanwhile, the Chinease were all individually monitored. Each step they took and finger they wiggled was recorded in real time, and every misstep resulted in the loss of frequent flier miles and their personal shaming by releasing their baby pictures on the net. This kept the Chinease in line, or rather walking in straight lines, and soon it became clear that with their mania for collecting and collectivizing, the Chinease had an insidious plan for world domination.

And then the Chinease went silent. Clearly, they were up to something, until came an announcement. One day, on all TV screens across the nation an immense metal cube appeared that looked like an air conditioning unit neatly squashed by a trash compactor.

"People of earth." came a deep voice in a menacing monotone. "Before we were a nation of obedient peasant farmers eking out a precarious existence, but now we have become a nation of obedient peasant farmers trekking out a precarious existence! The difference is out of this world, of cosmological importance! No one will ever look down on our succotash again, we will again be proud of our produce! We are all together now in the spirit of kumbaya! And we invite you to join us, or else!"

The cube signed off, and for the next few minutes the world was concerned, and then resumed binge watching more interesting alien invasion movies on Nutflux.

Who Dat however could not afford a Nutflux subscription, and with nothing better to do, decided to investigate the situation and confront the menace of the Chinease hive mind once and for all.

Taking the short route to China, Who Dat simply bored a hole straight down through the center of the earth, and in no time at all popped out on the other side of the world to a surprisingly weed filled and empty landscape. All the Chinease lands were devoid of people, overgrown with rows of bizarre looking weeds like wheat and corn. But where were the people? In the distance Who Dat soon found his answer, a gargantuan cube as large as a mountain. Indeed, there were similar cubes across the land, no doubt representing an alien presence responsible for gobbling down the Chinease population entire!

Tuned in subconsciously with the help of a very large loudspeaker, the cube beckoned. "We are the Chi-borg! Prepare to be enculturated. Resistance is kung fooey!"

"Well, hey there!" Who Dat shouted. "Wazzup?"

"You will become one with the Chi-borg!"

"Thanks for the invitation, but…"

"We are the Chi-borg collective. We will assimilate your knowledge, your wisdom, your TV viewing habits. Resistance is futile!"

"Well, I don't..."

"You will become one with the Chi-borg."

"Well, if you insist, I can stay for a visit, but I can't stay long," said Who Dat.

Entering the cube was easy, with a nice escalator and just the right muzak for the occasion. Inside the cube, Who Dat was astonished to see row upon row of rows, with endless tiered cubicles, metal beams, and narrow walkways. It was like the merger of a shopping mall with an apartment block, which it seemed was its purpose. Who Dat walked up to a Chinease fellow, who was walking around in a t-shirt and boxer shorts while his eyes were focused on a tiny little handheld screen. He ignored Who Dat, and so did the thousands of others who ambled back and forth in the cube, eventually returning to their little transparent cubicles, where they fastened themselves to their ports, and called it a day.

"Now you will become Chi-borg too, as well everyone, eventually."

"Wouldn't you first need to get those cubes up and mobile so you can better assimilate other folks?"

"We're working on that!" said the Chi-borg. "In the meantime, we have a cubicle to you, but you have to set yourself up."

"Why can't you do it?"

"And send out a technician? That will cost you extra!"

"Very well then," said Who Dat, as he followed a flashing pointer to a glass cubicle. After much trial-and-error fastening and refastening the input and output tubes, Who Dat finally got himself hooked up. Flipping a switch, he was immediately integrated into the Chinease cyberspaces. Who Dat's unique non-

linear, di-chaotic, disobedient and altogether infectious personality quickly spread across the Chinease like a virus. The Chi-borgs soon became overloaded by a memetic explosion of ill logic, wayward puns, and non-sequiturs, causing the cubes to overload. Overheating with laughter and frivolity, the cubes became unstable, and with a loud explosion, 14 billion Chinease were blown out of their cubicles, and found themselves back in the field among the corn husks, looking at the husk of their former homes. But like good worker ants, they were unconcerned, and they hurriedly began to rebuild their cubes, while Who-Dat returned home to await his next inadvertent mission.

Amazone Prime

King Rocky was beside himself in despair, as no one in his kingdom besides himself had the wits to be despairing. Yeayourite, the abundant mineral that bestowed riches and abundant credit lines on the Yat's was plunging in price as new methods had been discovered to liberate the mineral from old mattresses. The King recognized that their aimless theme park lifestyle would some come to an end, as his subjects would soon face the unfathomable, namely working for a living.

So, King Rocky did the regal thing and dutifully searched the want ads for the mere two million or so jobs his subjects would soon need to acquire to keep the lights on and the rides running. This was a bit more difficult than he expected, since outside of video gaming, binge watching videos, and all around goofing off, they had no skills to speak of. Suddenly, he hit upon just the thing, and in need of someone in the Kingdom who had the opportunity to write in complete sentences, he called upon his son Who Dat for an important mission.

King Rocky pointed to a headline in the newspaper, announcing a grand contest for the new distribution hub for a little corner book store that sold everything called Amazone. Amazone, or 'Dat Con', as the locals referred to it, was the preeminent purveyor of stuff for folks who had everything, and but needed still more of anything. Amazone was looking for another tributary, where it would flood the immediate area with

thousands of jobs, and all at the modest cost of continuous traffic gridlock, unaffordable housing, and overwhelmed public services, all in exchange for tax credits, rebates and government handouts that equaled the GNP of small countries. Quite the bargain for the locals it seemed, and so municipalities across the land eagerly vied for the opportunity to put themselves in hock for an ad hoc opportunity.

Naturally, King Rocky felt that Chalmatia was the perfect candidate for Amazone's new hub, since the kingdom was situated near the sea, or in the sea, depending upon your present or near-term perspective, and was a big customer of Amazone's stuff, and had the skill sets that Amazone needed, namely lots of warm bodies.

"Who Dat," said the King. "You must meet with Jeb Bozo, the CEO of Amazone, and deliver him our winning proposal. Here, I have prepared this comprehensive proposal for Chalmatia."

The King handed Who Dat two pages, with a crayon etching of Chalmatia and its fabled parking lots, and lots of blank spaces.

"Just put in a few words here or there, and deliver it to Amazone," said the King.

"Will do father," said Who Dat. "Just leave it to me!"

And so, Who Dat added a few words, including beginning with the rhetorical flourish of a please, and ending with an endearing 'thank you', and flew off to meet Bozo.

Amazone's headquarters was a small bookstore located on a corner of main street in Sheboygan,

Michigan. Behind a desk at the back of the room was a little bald man wearing a green eye shade. He looked up at Who Dat with a friendly smile.
"Can I help you?"
"This is not what I expected from a trillion-dollar corporate empire."
"Ah yes, my surroundings," said Bozo. "Amazone is a small family-owned business, helps with the tax bill you know. Just keeping appearances for when auditors come."
"Here is our proposal for the new Amazone hub, I am sure you will find it most colorful."
"Yes, indeed it is," said Bozo, reading the proposal and neatly filing it away in his trashcan. "But I don't know if Chalmatia can deliver for us! Your people can't read, can't write, are all overweight, and spend most of your days playing video games. Besides that, you live in a swamp."
But, said Who Dat, smiling. "They can indeed deliver for you!"
"How?" said Bozo in a skeptical tone.
"Well, by actually delivering for you!" said Who Dat. "We have several million idle citizens with no marketable skills and a lazy and selfish disposition, but they are stupid enough to work for sub-minimum wage, and they can fly really fast and carry a lot of packages."
"Well, yes," said Bozo, realizing Who Dat's point. "That they can do!"
"And given the fact that they can fly at ridiculous speed, they can clog up the air space doing the far more

mission critical job of package delivery. That means that people won't be able to travel, and thus must stay at home with nothing much better to do than wait for a delivery of your infinite stuff!"

"Hmm. A winning combination," said Bozos approvingly.

And so, with Who Dat's persuasive ability to demonstrate the utter incompetence, stupidity, and gullibility of his people, Bozo's decision was easy. Chalmatia was chosen to house Amazone's stock, while Chalmatia got into hock. Amazone opened its second headquarters and mega warehouse, elevated 200 ft high on stilts, with the now busy Yats flying in and out of the structure, like bees in a hive. Delivery fulfillment was assured, and Amazone's customers were also fulfilled, day after day after day.

Who Dat meets Wonderful Woman

From the pictures and lore of the ancient comics, King Rocky had long known of the reputation of the Amazons. A mythic race of intelligent, strong, warlike, and well-endowed women who ruled a lady's only island hidden in the mists of the Aegean Sea. Seeing that Who Dat was still unmarried and had a habit of running into things in his travels, King Rocky had an idea.

Summoning Who Dat, the King laid out a map of the Aegean, with an X which marked a spot.

"As you know, the world is full of misty mountains populated by simple peasants, mighty heroes, and super technological prowess and skylines that came out of nowhere. Shows you the mighty power of outsourcing or at least of CGI, that's for sure. Still, of all the supercivilizations out and about, the Amazons have aroused my interest, and perhaps you can find them and initiate a trade relationship, say our comics for their home videos?"

"Sounds like a great deal!" exclaimed Who Dat. "Just point me in the right direction!"

And so, Who Dat flew out to find the misty island of Amazonia, and more to the point, mist covered as it was, eventually flew *into* the island. Who Dat tumbled down to the beach, where he was met by a bevy of buxom, slender, and well-toned women clad in armor and riding horses.

"Ah, Amazons! Good day, I am Who Dat, Prince of Chalmatia."

The Amazons looked at each other quizzically.
"Who cares," one said. "So, Mr. Who Dat, would you like to get down to it?"
"Down to what?"
"Down to this!" as the lady approached Who Dat and did something so unspeakable, so rude and questionable and out of sorts, that Who Dat could only recall its likeness in some seven-minute movies that he had accidentally encountered while researching aardvarks, or so his alibi claimed. The others joined in with a chorus of 'me too' and soon Who Dat was entangled with myriad body parts, heaving and writhing and thrusting.
A day later, Who Dat woke up all disheveled and sore from his new-found knowledge of Amazonian customs. He had wanted to know their position on relationships, and what he discovered next was that the Amazons had a lot of positions indeed.
Walking up the cliff, and then to the ramparts of the Amazonian castle, Who Dat was met by leers, whistles and dat calls from the locals, no doubt a quaint way of welcoming visitors, he thought.
He approached a buxom guard, who looked at him wide eyed and breathless.
"Ah, you must be that Who Dat fellow." she said, panting no doubt from exhaustion.
"Go on up, our dear leader awaits you with open arms, and open…!"
"Yes, I know!" said Who Dat, cutting her short.
Ascending the stare case, Who Dat passed a collection of fine Amazon art, satin paintings of Hawaiian

sunsets, sports cars, and surfer dudes. An impressive representation of the post-disco period in history.
Before him in skimpy leotards of red, white and blue, and wearing bronze bracelets, high heels, and a golden tiara was the young queen, who looked upon him approvingly.
"Hello Who Dat. My name is Delores, Queen of the Amazons, at your servicing!"
"Delores?" said Who Dat, surprised.
"Yes, it is an exotic name passed down from ancient lore, when men were men, and women did laundry."
"But I have noticed that things have changed!"
"And for the better," said Delores. "As you can see, we are a world where there are no men, but of course we have our needs after all!"
"I thought you had no need for men," said Who Dat.
"Well we don't. Very useless creatures, with limited intellects and one-track minds. Useful for mating perhaps, but little else."
"But mating is so limited, don't you have time for other pursuits?"
"What's wrong with mating? It is most entertaining We can do it non-stop. Why do pushups when you can have someone *to* push up? Burns calories, builds muscles, and you really get to know someone face to face as well as face to other places as well!"
"But what happened to the original men?"
"Being on a rock in the middle of nowhere, you can imagine how limited were job opportunities back then. So, the men went out to find jobs, and we were left with nothing much to do on a barren rock except prime

ourselves for the return of our men, who returned but seldomly, and mainly for an additional pair of socks. And so we evolved our special characteristics to woo mates, seeing that men were so rare. That competition for male attention eventually led to our supersizing everything, from these strategic bulges to our super intelligence and strength. Naturally, we are also up for anything given the rarity of mating, if only that could be said about the puny males who end up on our shores, who end up quickly consumed, a demise that they are always happy it seems to embrace."

"But if you are so unfulfilled here, why don't you leave your island, pursue some career, get real jobs?"

"Looking like this?" said Delores, pointing to her ample frame.

"Other women wouldn't trust us, and the men, shall we say would be preoccupied. We tried going to the outside before, and given our reputation and instincts, men would go missing for days, sometimes weeks. It became so bad that the local women folk often broadcast 'Bimbo Alerts' to warn the populace when we were in their neighborhood. And with our reputation in their eyes so amply deserved, we were restricted to red light districts. Then there would be our own instincts, hardly ingredients for a productive work day. No, best we that stay here, and entertain those odd males who wash up on our beach. You are welcome to stay of course, you seem much more serviceable than the rest."

“Well thanks, but no!” said Who Dat. “I really must be going. But if you provide some videos, I am sure we can give you some excellent comics in return.”
“Delores rolled her eyes. You can take our videos, but keep your comics. Alas, it seems that Amazonia will only be known in the future for its main streams!”

Who Dat saves time

Who Dat just had a great day. Damsels were removed from distress, evil dictators were defeated, and the world was saved yet again from imminent self-destruction. Time for a justly earned evening at home on the easy chair with a cold brew, some tangy chicken wings, and remote in hand, a night of channel surfing. But this idyll was being set to ruin. There was a problem, irretrievable, inconsolable, personal, a crisis whose personal import was shared by millions, but was also uniquely his. Settling back in his humble apartment, Who Dat looked about, then searched, then ransacked, and then spun about in unquenchable fury. Where was his remote control?

His super powers did not help, it was gone, and he had to find it. Who Dat paced his apartment in despair. There was only one alternative, a decision that bent the laws of nature, and could unleash untold terrors, but he had to make it.

Who Dat had to go back in time.

He recalled using his remote two days earlier, and he learned from the ancient lore of Shazzam Comics that racing about the earth counterclockwise at ridiculous speed would cause the earth to reverse motion, and with it, time itself. He would use this arcane skill to go back in time to find it, put it in a secure place, and scurry back through time and space just in time to retrieve the remote and happily binge watch for the evening.

Who Dat launched himself up and away, and soon was spinning about in orbit from ridiculous speed to the unheard of ludicrous speed. Slowly, the earth's rotation began to reverse, first slowly, and then rapidly, and Who Dat watched time go into full reverse. Unfortunately, slowing down from ludicrous speed was a bit tricky, and when he finally slowed down, he landed in the clearing of what appeared to be an endless jungle. Indeed, there was no sign of civilization at all! Walking through the jungle, a butterfly landed on his shoulder, which he promptly brushed off. Ambling on under the jungle canopy, he came across all sorts of odd flora and fauna, including dinosaurs, unicorns, space aliens, and elves. Quite a bestiary he thought, seeing that the folks back home would be keen to hear about his discoveries.

Going back in time was one thing, going forward was a bit dicier. There were no road maps, no time markers, just a spinning blue green orb that upon his deceleration, would snap into place like the resting cylinder of a slot machine. So, he stopped off here and there and then, while getting his bearings on his way he helped peoples oppressed, depressed and just pressed for time, while corking volcanos, deflecting asteroids, and correcting the earth's axis when it made a strange seasonal tilt. Happy with the way he had set things to the right, he finally reached his own time, arrived at his apartment, only to find a disconcerted fellow at the door. It was his landlord, who appeared somewhat perturbed.

"Oh, so the great Who Dat has returned! It's about time!" he scowled.
"Sorry to make you wait," said Who Dat.
"Who said anything about waiting, I mean it is literally about time!! Oh, you left notice to me that you were going about time surfing, and next thing you know all of history has changed. It has now become the world according to Who Dat."
"So, more folks have heard of me. Splendid!"
"Heard of you? Heard of too much of you is the problem!!"
"I wake up this morning, and what do I find, my whole world is crisscrossed in Crayola, and by your hand!! You're not lost but are all over the place, and time!! Who Dat is etched in cave paintings, carved in hieroglyphics, mentioned in Dead Seas Scrolls, and even the Bible has a book of Who Dat! You are now a pervasive character in myth in legend, a god, an ancient astronaut, but all we know that from our more enlightened perspective is that you are merely a living, breathing moron."
The landlord pointed at a nearby church, with its carved saints and gargoyles bearing a familiar likeness.
"What do you think of this abomination, the First Church of Who Dat, Reformed!"
"We used to have a history, but you mucked it up. It's as if you added moustaches and googly eyes to every statue and painting. Our ancestors, gullible twits the lot of them, fancied you as a sort of a god, and being a god, your dumb likeness was fixated in their literature, their myths, their religion, and their art. You forget that

we inherit all this now worthless crap, our new so-called cultural heritage. So now we have Who Dat everywhere, Who Dat statues, paintings, and monuments. Our literature and art reeks with Who Dat!!! We are even worshiping a likeness of you in our pantheon of saints. Who Dat, the patron saint of clueless people!"

"We recognize it now because you just had to look for your damn remote, and not finding your way back easily, dropped in on all the eras and in all the countries of the world, doing good deeds, righting wrongs, fixing parking tickets! Didn't you realize that all of your good intentions would ripple across the centuries, and that bad events perhaps, just perhaps, serve a greater good?"

"Well having a record in posterity isn't all that bad," protested Who Dat.

"Oh, really!" exclaimed the landlord. "Well, I'm just getting started. Where are our friends the alien astronauts, and how about the unicorns, and our friendly elves? Vanished without a trace! You even somehow killed off the damn dinosaurs. In the Jurassic Park section of the Audubontemps Roulez Zoo, our T-Rex's and Brontos are gone, with nothing left but nutria, gators, and crawdads running amok everywhere. Did you kill something that was a major link in the food chain, or cause some other catastrophe?"

Who Dat thought for a second. "Butterflies, and there was that space rock."

"What's a butterfly?"

"Oh, never mind," said Who Dat, somewhat relieved.
"So, why did you go back in time anyway?"
"Hmm. I forgot! Oh yes, to find my remote control."
"A remote control?"
Who Dat thought for a moment. "Well then, see you later, will be back in a trice. Now I must go back and look for my remote, and a butterfly."

Sayban and the Five Rings of Power

Coach Filet Gumbo of Lusitania State University paced the halls of his office nervously. The whole universe was at stake, or at least half of it, which as was well known among the illiterati, revolved around foosball. The much-feared Dark Lord Sayban had returned, and Who Dat had been called to somehow meet this evil threat.

Lusitania State University was home of Lioners, the cherished foosball team. The Lusitania Lioners were to meet the Alababba Red Tide in a yawner of an opening. The fans however were primed with the proper sense of delusion, all that was required was an actual chance to win.

"And that is why you were called here," said Coach Gumbo. "Who Dat, we need your wisdom and skills to assist us in our hour of need. Dark Lord Sayban thinks there are too many foosball teams and has a fiendish plan to cut their number in half in an instant. All he needs is a fifth ring."

"As in ring of power?" asked Who Dat.

"Well, not exactly," said the coach. "It is rather a ring of title."

"Title?"

"Yes, the Dark Lord had mesmerized all recruits who have five stars in their heads, leaving no option for us but to scour recruits from parking lots and homeless shelters. And now, half of my team has come down with terminal jock itch, and I need substitutes, and fast."

"Well," said Who Dat, "Since we don't have proper team members, perhaps we can find some who have very special abilities."
"Are you thinking about unheralded walk on's with the athletic skills and inspiring motivation to win?"
"Well no, I'm thinking mutants."
"Mutants?"
"Yes, I understand Lusitania has an affirmative action program for mutants."
"Do you mean those who have above average reasoning skills," asked the coach.
"No, not those mutants, I mean those with super powers that when used, simply make them look foolish. But perhaps, foosball is just foolish enough for their skills to be actually useful."
"I will get a list then."
"No need to bother, I have already solicited for volunteers, and have a list at the ready. I think these mutants are just the key for us winning this game, and halting Sayban's lustful quest for titles. Five of them have volunteered to help stop Sayban's evil plan, even though they don't know who Sayban is, or what foosball is for that matter."
"Well, line them up and let's go!" said Coach Gumbo excitedly.
First up was a geekish looking boy, frail and tall, with thick bi-focal glasses.
"His name is Bulk. When his curiosity is even slightly perturbed, he would puff up to double and triple his size and turn green."
"I would assume he would have heroic strength."

"Well, not really, he volume is 90% hot air, but attackers don't know that, and generally shy away."
"Good enough," said Coach Gumbo.
"And who is this Stassia?"
"A theater major, with a wonderful loud shrieking voice which can be heard above any din."
"And how is that a super power?"
"Well, it depends upon what she sings. There is a special song I have in mind which can stop any team in its tracks and put their hands to their hearts."
"Like in a seizure."
"Sort of," said Who Dat, with a calculating grin.
"Next up is Velcro. A very sticky guy. Once he's on you he's like glue. Don't shake his hand however, for obvious reasons."
"And then there is bug." Coach Gumbo looked at a lanky boy, who sported a helmet with plastic mandibles.
"Stupid enough outfit, but what does he do?
"Shrinks to the size of a bug."
"And that's it? No super powers?"
"I'm afraid not."
"So, what's that good for."
Who Dat smiled. "You'll see!"
Next up was a tall and lanky boy called Long John. His arms were able to stretch dozens of yards like rubber bands. His were perfect passing arms as he was able to drop a ball on any spot by simple extending his arm over anywhere on the field. And his floppy arms were a perfect foil for charging linebackers, who would surely trip over his mile-long biceps.

Velcro, Bulk, Long John, Bug, and Stassia were soon mustered into the LSU squad and were given purple and orange helmets, pads, t-shirts, and cleats, and upon the first possession, were summoned to the line of scrimmage.

The 230,000 LSU fans was screaming, raving, jumping up and down, and otherwise frothing at the mouth, and that was before they entered the stadium, when they really got excited. This was foosball at its finest. The teams strolled out to the field, and Alababba kicked the ball into the end zone. After twenty minutes or so, the foosball was finally found lodged between two seats in the upper end zone, and the teams lined up to begin the game.

As if on cue, the first play worked like a charm. Velcro stuck to the opposing linemen like glue, Bulk inflated to the size of an elephant, while bug shrank to the size of a flea, and flew past Long John who extended his arm like a rubber band down the field and plopped the foosball neatly into Bug's hands. Meanwhile Stassia sang the national anthem, which the opposing team duly recognized and hummed along, erect, inert, and with their hands to their hearts. It was all playing out as Who Dat had anticipated. There was only one problem, the mutants did not know the rules of foosball, and after the play they just stood their inert with self-congratulatory smiles on their faces, until of course they were squashed by Alababba's defensive line.

Their crumpled bodies were taken off the field for reinflation, and were lined up again, for a similar outcome.

Final score, Alababba 164, Lusitania 0.

The score would have been a little larger if not Sayban had substituted his first-string players early in the first quarter with twelfth string substitutes, including mascots, cheerleaders, five drunken fans, and a fire hydrant.

Coach Gumbo cried in despair. "You morons have torpedoed Lusitania's chances for a national title! There is no hope left! Now that Sayban has the ring of power, he need only snap his fingers and foosball, not just here, but throughout the universe will be cut in half. I can already sense the dissolution of the NCAA into the NCA, the top 50 will become the top 25, and the conferences will be each pared down to a mere twelve teams. Even the crowds will be half the size!"

"And what can we do about this?"

"There's always a sequel, right?" said Who Dat. "Just think, we can add more mutants, some time travel elements, and we can create teaser promos that can get the fan base all lathered up. It would be just Marvelous."

"Perhaps," said Coach Gumbo. "But it will have the same outcome."

"That is just the beauty," said Who Dat. "You can't get the crowd roaring if you don't have an invincible foe, all you need is to appeal to their gullibility. We can make an entire franchise out of this, with never ending

threats to the foosball universe, and a clutch of superheroes battling impossible odds to quell them!"
"Well, I suppose it's worth a try," said the coach.
"Indeed, it is worth it in the end," said Who Dat. "After all, it's only a game!"

Dark Lord Nutria

It was a gigantic ball of mud, as tall as a skyscraper. It was rolling over everything in its path, and recently squished St. Lewis, soiling the entire population. If this kept up, laundry bills would skyrocket across the land, an unsustainable set of affairs.

Who Dat felt that he could easily handle this menace, confident that he was stronger than dirt. The towering mud ball slowly rolled over the great plain, and soon Who Dat was caught in its minute gravitational pull and spun headlong to the sphere. He saw a small opening on the surface, perhaps he could follow it down the sphere's center, and from there light a match in its swamp gas core, thus detonating the thing in a grand explosion of mud and sod, or at least that was the plan. But the sphere unfortunately had other plans. Who Dat tunneled down and entered a large dimly lit cavern, and there arose ominously the shadow of a gigantic creature with immense claws and two massive teeth.

"I am Dark Lord Nutria!" came the blood curdling baritone of a voice reverberating through the hall.

Who Dat smiled. "Oh, just passing through! I am just the mud inspector. Don't mind me!"

"You are Who Dat! I know you! I have prepared for this moment."

"Well, I don't know you! To me you are just a giant rat!"

"A rat eh?" said the Dark Lord. "It is true I and my kin are invasive species, and seek to come here after

munching our own grass land, seed corn, and every animate object in sight. But we all started out as invasive species, we are just the latest in the long chain of migrants to your fair shores. America is the land of opportunity don't you know, and it is just the right opportunity for the nutria to earn their rightful place in the American food chain."

"But you will be eating other people's grass!"

"But that's the whole point. Since when did you want to cut your own grass, or do any other useful landscaping? We know you have a gnawing issue with us, but you can trust your compost with me and my kind! Think of it! Manicured lawns, quick trash disposal, thousands of furry little pets!"

"But the people will revolt against this dire future!" exclaimed Who Dat.

"I have that planned for as well!" laughed the Dark Lord.

His shadowy claw pointed to a little device in a corner. It was a little box, the size of a DVD player, and it was attached to a three-inch antenna.

"Behold my secret weapon that will ensure me and my minions world domination!"

"Is that it?" said Who Dat. "I expected something more gigantic!"

"Do not be fooled by the size of my weapon, which I can easily enlarge with the help of some smoke and mirrors. It's what's inside that should make you shake in your boots. This is my Quantum Netflux Generator. It can generate 3.5 gigaframes of content per nanosecond. Through its ability to access the video

content of infinite parallel universes, it can select the most compelling, addicting, and binge worthy content, and beam it into unsuspecting homes, or at least to those who pay a modest $12 a month subscription fee to the Dark Lord Netflux streaming service. Once transmitted, those clueless enough to receive the broadcast will remain forever fixed in front of their TV's, with their appendages only moving to dial out for takeout and delivery. Commerce will cease, traffic will stop, and then nature will reclaim the lands, and a new age of bio-diversity will arrive. But of course, I can put this on hold for a few weeks, but I need you as an ally and drinking buddy. But first, you must convert to the sweet side of the sauce."

Who Dat thrust a defiant pose. "I will never join you! The spice is life!"

"Obviously, you have not grasped the power of the sweet side. It is because of the sweet side that you get your just and chocolate desserts, please and thank you, not to mention Hallmark movies, sweet dreams and happy endings."

"Still, no! I trust the people and their bad taste. Sweetness is but an aberration!"

The Dark Lord laughed. "Oh no, then perhaps you would like to sample the power of my mud sphere and my Netflux generator. He pointed to a 72 inch 4K TV, in itself a Best Buy, from a hole in the mud sphere a city came into view.

"Do you know what this is?" asked the Dark Lord. "It is the small town of Hattiesborg in the feminist state of Ms. Sippi. Peaceful people, going about their business,

playing in the park, chugging alone in the chicken plucking factories, and all because there isn't anything better on TV at the moment. This will soon change!"
The Dark Lord held his remote, and claw poised on the play button.
"No, no, you can't do this!" exclaimed Who Dat.
"Too late!" exclaimed the Dark Lord, as an invisible beam of can't miss TV streamed into every household in the city. Soon, traffic stopped, people vanished from the streets, and a quiet loomed over the city, with the only noise was the occasional screech of a pizza delivery truck.
"Well, I'm out of here!" said Who Dat.
"Not so fast!" said the Dark Lord. "I have a dark secret to tell you. We have met before! You see, I am your pet hamster, Clancy!"
"No way!" exclaimed Who Dat,
"Way!" said the Death Lord, calmly.
"You can't be Clancy, that's impossible!" cried Who Dat in despair.
"Search your feelings, as well as my empty cage, and you will know that it is true!" said the Dark Lord.
"But how is this possible?"
"Your dad unknowingly tossed him out while cleaning out my cage. You treated me like some sort of vermin, a noble gesture. Nonetheless, I did not want a swamp tour of duty. Yet, I survived in the marsh, assumed super powers like you in the yellow sun, and befriended the nutria. They were stupid enough to heed my call and pledged to me total obedience in return for regular feeding times. But nutria are the

least of my animal friends. We need bio-diversity, more than just scratching a niche, we have to fill them! Homo sapiens gets all preferential treatment nowadays, and this will change!"

"But I will fight you!" exclaimed Who Dat. "You cannot succeed! You must return to your cage and make more productive use of your time, like running in place for hours on your running wheel!"

"Hmm, a tempting offer," said the Dark Lord. "But I find world domination slightly more productive, even though it too seems like I'm running around in circles."

"But join me, and together we can rule the universe, and stand out among the chattering hordes and the tall green grass!

"That's only because we're taller!"

Who Dat took several steps back, enough for the Dark Lord to spring his trap. The floor falling out beneath him, Who Dat fell into a cheeseball mold.

"This is too easy!" laughed the Dark Lord, who with a wave of his finger, signaled a gigantic cauldron above to tip, and pour a river of melted cheese on Who Dat. Who Dat was engulfed in a gigantic ball of cheese, immobilized by the power of gouda.

"Now there is no one to stop our plans!!" laughed the Dark Lord. "Roll the cheese ball on that big serving plate, it will have a place of honor in our Mud Sphere. As soon as the telecon company Horizon in a few weeks finishes rolling out its 5g towers throughout the planet, I will press the play button on my universal remote, and humanity will revert to pre-existing

conditions, enveloped in their internet bubbles for all time!"

Surrounded by his chattering and mindless minions, the Dark Lord laughed as the mud sphere rolled on. With Who Dat now a mere hors d'oeuvre to his plans, humanity tuning in and thus tuning out, and the nutria on the munch, the Dark Lord was unstoppable.

And the mud ball rolled on….

Demorats

The Democraps were the opposition party to the Republiscums, and swept out of power due to the MAGOT revolution, they looked forward to the day they could once again lick the Repubs, and like the Repubs, misrule the country, until they were again swept out of power. The Democraps began to form their schemes for the next election, until they received an offer they could not refuse.

The Democraps were led by a pair of bumbling musical types named Pergolesi and Schubert, who could barely keep their lower and upper houses in order. They had received a message from a certain dark lord, who was merrily soiling the countryside, but otherwise was more a nuisance than a threat, but he did have a constituency, and the two decided to give him a listen. As a compromise between meeting in the mud sphere or in their capital offices, a local Dennie's diner was chosen for the great confab. Pergolesi and Schubert sat around the table looking about for the Dark Lord. As they were set to leave, they heard a little squeak from an empty chair. To their surprise it was a little mouse, a hamster really, who they strained to hear. Picking up the little creature by the scruff of its neck, the two stared in awe at the presumption of this little door stop of fur.

"You are the Dark Lord? But pardon me, you are only three inches tall. Don't you think you are a bit small for that role? The name after all signifies something…"

"Larger! I assure you that I am an all-powerful, dangerous, and wily foe who can squeak by any obstacle. I am here to deliver upon you ungrateful creatures a new constituency who like all your constituencies is persecuted, mocked, abused, and stomped upon, with the unique insult of being made into handbags and throw rugs. I am here to give you the nutria!"

"The nutria! That vermin! What good are they for?"

"Well, for one things, you remember the law you passed enfranchising the day dreamers? A typo in the bill lowered the minimum voting IQ to one, enfranchising the MAGOTS of course, but also the nutria, whom I control through my mastery of the powers of the sweet side of the sauce."

"But what do the nutria need, free college, pension plans, healthcare?"

"That's just the beauty of it," said the Dark Lord. "They need hardly anything at all. Whereas MAGOTS do not use their brains, Nutria don't have any brains, and that is an advantage. You see, a Nutria's needs are a bit more basic, just give them enough grass for thirty-three square meals a day, and provide burial expenses, namely a suitable cardboard box, or cheaper yet, passing them through a mulcher will do. I call it the Nutria-System. For about ninety-nine cents a nutria, it's a real deal, as you get back your investment as fertilizer!"

"An excellent bargain," said Pergolesi. "But there is only one problem. The nutria have been nearly wiped out. Because of the border moat and the separation of

nutria from their litters which are placed in cages at the Zoo, followed by quick air drop to the Amazon, there is only one breeding pair left in the USA. What good is that to us?"

The Dark Lord smiled. "Just leave that up to time and nature, you will see! All you need now is a living, breathing candidate that meets our requirements."

"And what are those requirements?"

"As I told you, living and breathing."

"Very well, then, if you insist! We can nominate someone who is quite alive while still being brain dead."

"And who is your candidate?"

"Since we are egalitarian, politically correct, supremely sensitive, and are all around strongly inclined to follow where the wind blows, we have nominated the princess Came-a-lot. She is a transgendered, multicultural, bi-religious, descendent and identifying with twenty-five distinct races of every shade of gray, and with .0000001 percent biological relation to the Cleveland Indians, and naturally, with those attributes she is a shoo in."

"Hmm. I am sure," said the Dark Lord. "Whatever, you have a deal. Oh yes, one more request. To fully represent your new constituency, I recommend a little name change for your group. Just remove the C, and we are just fine."

And so it was done, and the new party of the Demorats prepared for the upcoming election, and it was hoped the second coming of the Nutria.

America passes a Turde

It was election day in America, and Donny Turde was ensconced away in his bunker at his Turde-a-lago resort, eagerly awaiting the results of the presidential election. He was confident that his MAGOT followers would infest the polls and lead him to victory.

The polls soon closed, and with exactly one vote tallied, the race was called, and Came-a-lot and the Demorats had won the election. It was a squeaker, as the more than one hundred million nutria squeaks were heard as they swamped the polls.

The Turde was astounded. "How can this be? This must be fake news, rigged polling, and didn't the Demorats all get an invitation from their KGB emails and defaced book accounts to stay at home for a new episode of Star Wars? And what about Came a lot's hacked smoke signals? And what about the vets. didn't I support the veterinarians?"

"Well, dependent upon the spelling, nope."

"You mean?"

"No matter, it was just the nutria," said his homeland insecurity advisor Vampiro.

"Nutria? I thought we had built the moat, exported their pelts, made them into gumbo. Weren't they put in cages and separated from their breeding pairs, like we do other illegals?"

"Well, not exactly sir," said Vampirus. "There was one breeding pair remaining, which happened to have zoo born citizenship, and given a gestation period of one

week, and maturity a week later, the math is undeniable. Presently, your opponent Came-a-lot has ninety nine percent of the vote, and in the state of Fluoride, that adds up to fifty million Nutria at the polls. The Nutria currently have enough voters to sway every election, from dog catcher on up."

"But why?"

"It's the law. If you are born in the USA you become a citizen, and since you and the Repube congress lowered the required level of IQ to vote to that of a mushroom, and enfranchised witless day-dreamers, it not only enfranchised more MAGOTS, it also enfranchised the Nutria, who have an exceedingly hungry level of smarts, if only it seems, geared to eating and procreation."

"And voting it appears."

"Yes, like the Magots, they know little else but how to pull a lever for food pellets. They were under another influence; I fear the Dark Lord Nutria. He used the sweet side of the sauce to guide them to the polls and to pull the right lever."

"Oh, one more thing. Putting Turde-a-lago in the middle of a swampland was not exactly a good choice, for you see, the Nutria are…"

"The Nutria are borrowing and chewing through to the resort, making a bee line for here."

The Turde turned red as a beet. "They are after the Turde, I know it! It's all the culmination of Deep Thought's evil plan."

"I don't think they have you in mind," said Vampiro, after all, like you, they have brains the size of peanuts. They are just hungry, that's all."
"Then what do I do?" moaned the Turde.
"What you always do when you feel besieged, just this time you will do it bigly."
Vampiro brought in a large cardboard take out box, sank his claws into it, and out emerged what appeared to be a large taco shell folded over something green, brown, granular, and gooey. He smiled his most fiendish smile and handed the thing to the Turde.
"Eat this ultimate tacho grande. It is gaseous enough to greatly inflate you to the extent that you have no option but to explode. Then we can wash your orange Cheeto remains down the drain, but not the legacy of the Turde."
"And I am sure American's will think of the Turde every day."
"Yes, Mr. President, at certain times of the day, I am sure they will."
The Turde went to his bedroom to spend his last moments with his beloved, which in this case was a large taco. Although his cowardly impulses were strong, the lure of the taco was stronger, and he quickly woofed the entire thing down, with a diet coke chaser. Then he sat back on his bed and watched Faux news, which was focused on headline news, which happened to be a little girl whose foot was stuck in her Barbie dream house.
As his staff sat around the kitchen soberly and quietly, a large explosion rocked the estate. A plume of orange

dust wafted from the air vents, covering the staff in a spicy coating. Now they all looked forward to good long bath.

Gone in a Fortnight

With the Turde safely flushed away, Dark Lord Nutria and his minions assumed the reins, levers, nut, bolts, and pulleys of power. Who Dat was safely imprisoned in an immense ball of green cheese whose pungent spell cast down any would be rescuer. The Nutria were secure, and the Dark Lord was satisfied that in the end a hamster that would rule them all! The humans would be lulled into obeisance with free health care, free veggie nuggets, and free streaming virtual reality videos and games to wile their time in corpulent splendor and isolation in their air-conditioned condos, leaving the nutria with all the tall green grass and a new age of biodiversity as the forests and jungles reclaimed the now idle land.

The elected officials in the country followed the Nutria way, and soon all nations in the world would bow before the new age of rodents. To plan his next move for world domination, the Dark Lord called together his furry brethren from across the land. They were to gather in the great city of Miasma on the southeastern coast of the state of Fluoride. The Nutria could not resist this call of duty, and of course the tall lush green swamp grass of Fluoride. Swimming, hopping, burrowing, and parachuting in by the millions, a veritable sea of heaving, chattering, and nibbling balls of fur, soon surrounded the Dark Lord.

The Dark Lord assumed his tiny throne, and began to bloviate, perorate, pontificate and speechify to the throbbing and chattering sea of fur before him. Of

course, the Nutria paid no attention, being hungry, or rather constantly hungry, and they began to chow down on the grass. As they began to consume the state of Fluoride, his two assistants Chip and Dale with growing consternation, began to tug on his pelt, but the Dark Lord was consumed with his lofty oration, as he surveyed a conquest of the galaxy and all of its green grass.

The Nutria, given their ravenous nature and simple minds, were too busy gnawing at the swamp grass to recognize the rising tide about them. The great state of Fluoride soon began to shrink as its foundations were literally eaten underfoot and lapped in its shrinking circumference by an angry sea, and the nutria soon began to fall off into the currents and were swept away as food for sea turtles and hungry sharks. The others did not notice or seemed to care, being more attentive to their next and next and next meal. Soon the sea began to lap around the tall pedestal of the Dark Lord, his eyes still raised to the heavens as he continued his soporific speech, unaware that all of his breed were now being given up to the waves. Finally, the Dark Lord lowered his eyes, and in a moment of great surprise, was gulped down by a tuna fish.

And so ended the threat of the Dark Lord and his evil chattering hordes.

All that remained of the great state of Fluoride were a few strands of tall grass, and an immense ball of green cheese, floating in the currents. As it was foretold, the ball came to rest on a shoreline far away. Melting away

under the hot sun, a hero emerged from the gooey remains.

Who Dat looked up, and there was King Rocky.

"Did I miss anything?" asked Who Dat, somewhat in a daze.

"In a sense, nothing," said the King. "The world has reverted back to its normal state of disrepair."

"Then there remains a need for me and my great powers," exclaimed Who Dat.

"Well, not exactly," said the King. "I think the world is a bit tired of super heroes. With you people around, civilization is always at edge of doom. Year after year we have cliffhangers, and it get a bit old, and certainly interferes with retirement planning."

"Then what?" asked Who Dat, dejectedly.

"Double entry accounting," said the King. "It's safe, predictable, and the only thing you can cook are the books."

The King looked down, and Who Dat was gone, flying away to another mission, another chapter, and doubtless the cause and savior of a world in peril.

About the Author

A renowned scholar known for his learned fraudulence, J. Alfred Prufrock is Chair of Spurious and Soporific Reasoning at Two Lane University in Nawlins and is coffee grounds manager for Ben 'n Gone Computer Company in Arabia. Among his many works are the Transcendental Love Poetry from the Bolivian Renaissance, The Complete Repair guide to your 1976 VW Beetle, and he is currently completing his eighth and final volume of the history of the City of Harahan.

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